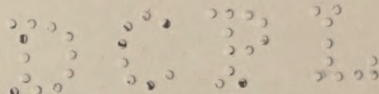


WARP AND WOOF.

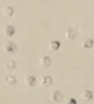
(McKenney)

ANNA HANSON DORSEY,

AUTHOR OF "COAINA," "FLEMMINGS," "TANGLED PATHS,"
"MAY BROOKE," ETC., ETC., ETC.



FIFTH THOUSAND.



JOHN MURPHY COMPANY,

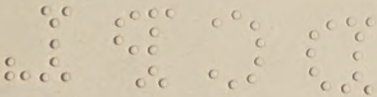
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1887

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WARP AND WOOF.

"Life is the warp; time is the shuttle; our own deeds the woof, which we weave day by day into a web of grotesque designs and strange patterns of light and shade, symbols of sins, sorrows, joys, and mayhap repentance."

CHAPTER I.

A LEAF FROM A JOURNAL.

NEW ORLEANS, Feb. 20th, 18—.

I HAD just returned from Europe, after an absence of four years, and was persuaded by my friend Raoul de Coucy, who had accidentally become my fellow-traveller in Norway, to go with him to New Orleans, a city I had never visited. It was his birthplace and home, had been the birthplace and home of his family for generations, and it was not strange that he should vaunt himself on its age, its history, traditions and prosperity. But after a few days I grew restive with longings for home and the faces I loved. I told him I should leave the following day.

"Oh, come now, Max, none of that!" he exclaimed, starting up from the chair he was lounging on, and standing before me; his handsome,

lazy-looking eyes flashing into sudden brightness; "you have not been here quite a week; you have seen nothing; you are not even rested, and the smell of the sea is not yet shaken from your clothes. Remember, old fellow, this is the land of romance and history, and not to be slighted even after a classical tour abroad. We have our traditions, our legends, our ruins, which you must hear and see. We go back, you know, to the days when the hildagos of Spain and the chivalry of France fought against each other on the soil of Louisiana, then with the Indians, and the brave, arrogant English; nor do we forget the rout of Pakenham and his Hessians, or the cotton-bale ramparts, from behind which Jackson and his wild Americans sent death and destruction among them. Ahem! I am patriotic, you see. But best of all, we have our *Mardi-gras*, which beats the Roman Carnival into nothing for actual fun. Let your traps alone, there's a good fellow, and don't forget that we are expected at Madame de Vigny's *soirée* this evening, where you'll meet the most exclusive of our French society."

Raoul was on his high horse, and I did not interrupt him; but by the time he stopped to draw breath, I had made up my mind to remain until after *Mardi-gras*, which I was really curious to see. I told him how I had decided, and after he had embraced and thanked me in his warm, southern fashion, I relocked my trunks; then we

lit our cigars, and strolled down-stairs, out upon the broad, flagged walk in front of the hotel, where a thick awning overhead made a grateful shade, and the splash of a fountain in the square near by imparted a sense of refreshment. After a few minutes' chat, Raoul left me to saunter—nobody rushes here—down to his cotton warehouse, near the quays, saying he would meet me at Ridenour's, a famous French restaurant, at 3 o'clock, where we would lunch. It was my purpose to go into the reading-room to look over the northern papers, and devote the rest of the morning to my correspondence, being sadly in arrears; but I loitered on, bewitched by the brightness and fragrance that filled the air. It was the middle of February. Possibly, at my home, farther north, the earth was sheeted with snow, but here, trees, roses and tropical flowers whose names I did not know, were in leaf and bloom. White jasmine and orange blossoms mingled their subtle perfume in the atmosphere, imparting a delicious languor to the senses, giving one an ideal of the rest and bliss of Elysium. I know that sounds paganish, but I will be honest and say that just then I felt so, and the mood was so delightful that I did not care to shake it off. Everything amused and interested me as in a dream; the negro women, arrayed in brightly-figured calicos, with great gold hoops in their ears, and bearing on their gaily-turbaned heads wicker baskets, or light wooden trays filled with

early vegetables, large, luscious strawberries, native oranges, lemons and bananas, who went by joking and bantering each other, in their Creole *patois*, with bursts of infectious laughter, whose merry key-note dwells only in the African temperament; little flower-girls who tripped by, singing scraps of song in the dialect of the Bayous to invite attention to their gracefully-offered fragrant wares; groups of beautiful girls, in simple but exquisite toilettes, bent on shopping, their laughing, coquettish eyes half hidden by their broad-brimmed, leghorn hats, chattering in pure French, their voices subdued to tones of propriety, and each group attended by a demure *bonne*; then, walking slowly, and apart from every one, appeared two beautiful quadroons, whose dresses were of some dark, silk tissue, which showed here and there a thread of gold, and who bore themselves with the air of eastern princesses. My attention was immediately arrested. I had seen them on Sunday going into the cathedral, as Raoul and I stood for a moment in the main entrance. "Mother and daughter," he had whispered, as they swept gracefully into the broad vestibule. I could scarcely credit him, they looked so nearly the same age. They had interested me then, and their appearance now so stirred my attention that I observed their movements to the exclusion of all other passing objects. Now and then they paused, looking this way and that, the greatest modesty and quiet

grace in every motion. I imagined they were expecting some one, and in a few minutes my conjecture was verified by the appearance of an old mulatto woman, very light, with large, keen black eyes; she wore a dark dress, a shawl of black twisted silk, and a gay Madras turban, while from her ears depended hoops of gold, crusted with brilliants that flashed and glittered at every movement. She stood a moment, shaded her eyes with her hand, and gazed up and down; a blithe little laugh rippled out, a small, gloved hand was waved towards her, then she saw them, nodded her head, hurried to meet them, and the three walked away together. It was she whom they had been expecting.

As they disappeared I recalled the conversation between Raoul and myself on the occasion of my first seeing them, after we left the cathedral.

"Their name," he said, "is Layet, and they are rich. There's an old grandmother, and the two you have just seen are mother and daughter. The daughter has just come home from some convent at the North, splendidly educated and accomplished."

"That is strange. I know the prejudices so well that it seems impossible," I remarked.

"The convent is in Montreal, where this girl, Cecile Layet, was reared, and educated with the daughters of the best families in Canada," he replied.

"But did they know—?"

"What? about her African blood? I suspect not. How could they tell? She's as fair as a magnolia, and without a ripple in her hair; she had rich clothes, plenty of spending-money; she was generous, devout and amiable, a great favorite, I have heard, and bore off the honors of her class when she finished. Of course I don't know them, and what I tell you I heard from an old aunt of mine, who, in turn, heard it from the godfather of Cecile, the parish priest."

"And what will be her future here?" I asked.

Raoul shrugged his shoulders. "She will associate with her own class," he said; "although rich and accomplished, and as pure as an angel, her African blood will prevent her rising above it, and her white blood from sinking beneath it. These quadroons have the pride of Satan. That girl, devout and innocent, now so closely guarded by her old grandmother that it would be at the peril of one's life to offer her a civility, will, in time, weary of her associations and pine for the cultured and refined ones she was so many years accustomed to; then, probably, tempted by one of 'the superior race,' with promises impossible of fulfilment, or deceived by a false marriage, she will be like the rest. It is their fate, the unfortunates!"

That is what Raoul had said, and, however it impressed me, it would have been sheer folly to have argued the right or wrong, the social or moral aspect of the problem thus presented to me

by him. The fact to his unreflecting, pleasure-loving mind was an inevitable one, in which he had no individual concern whatever; he would have considered it lowering to himself, had he given the subject any serious thought; besides, what could he do against old, deeply-rooted prejudices and customs? He knew full well what the folly and danger of any such meddling would be, if he ever, in his graver moods, gave this outgrowth of slavery a moment's consideration; so if misgivings came, it was only like Raoul to "whistle them down the wind," as he did everything that threatened to trouble him in mind, body, or estate.

I had dismissed the beautiful quadroons from my mind—for why should I, a stranger, perplex and sadden myself with questions in which I had no personal concern? But seeing them again so unexpectedly on this fair, lovely morning, re-awakened all my human sympathies for beings who, by an evil accident of birth, were made out-cast. But I shook off the feelings that moved my better nature. I was no moralist, and I frankly admit my religion sat lightly on my shoulders. There was too much to remember and regret in my own career for me to sit in judgment on a people, or do battle with their sins. "It is plainly God's affair, not mine," I thought; "His mill grinds slowly, but it is exceeding sure; and some time, when the world is dreaming, the *dies iræ* will come."

I was out of tune: my beautiful dream of an hour ago, when the simple sense of living was happiness enough to fill my whole being, was broken. I was in no mood for letter-writing, and, lighting a fresh cigar, I determined to exorcise the disturbed spirit that now possessed me, by seeking new objects of interest amongst the byways of the old city. Taking a course entirely unfamiliar, that led me away from the modern and fashionable quarters, I found myself, after many turnings and windings, among a net-work of narrow streets, reeking with moist filth and ill odors, and crowded with all the varied movement and confusion of commercial traffic. I was jostled by negro laborers with heavy sacks upon their shoulders, and nearly run over by drays and trucks, which, with the distracting uproar on every side, gave me a strong impulse to get away as speedily as possible to a more quiet thoroughfare. In my efforts to accomplish this, I sank over my shoe-tops in the black ooze of the street, and my white flannel suit, and even my face, were spattered as I navigated myself, dodging for life among the horses and wheels, across to a certain opening, which appeared to promise what I was in quest of. I stopped to take breath and wipe the mud from my face, then I looked about me. I saw that I was on the corner of a wider and less crowded street than the one I had just escaped from, and after walking a short distance, my at-

tention was attracted by an object which at once awakened a strange interest. It was an old mansion, completely hidden by trees, except a tower which rose above them; it was surrounded by a wall of solid masonry, over ten feet high, and standing three or four feet above the level of the street, was, as may be supposed, singularly conspicuous. This portion of the city, it was evident, had originally been built on more elevated ground, until its growth and prosperity demanding more room, the soil surrounding the old edifice had been ruthlessly cut away to grade the streets to a more convenient level for traffic, leaving only enough about it to save the foundation of the walls, which were so high and thick as to leave me in doubt that they had been built more for purposes of defence than to mark the boundaries of the gardens they enclosed. I was possessed of a strange desire to get beyond those walls. But how should I find entrance? There was no gateway on this side, and I turned into a narrow lane on the left, but it was the same, a massive blank wall; then I followed its northern length, with the like result; but on the east side, about midway, I saw a short flight of rough board steps, leaning against the embankment in front of a great iron-studded double door, which was set deep in the masonry of the wall and framed in massive stone. In a few moments I had scrambled up the rickety steps, and was taking a nearer view of the grim entrance, which

reminded me of the portals of some of the old mediæval prison fortresses I had seen abroad; but there was no bell-pull—there was apparently no method by which the keeper of the place could be summoned to a parley; had there been, I should have had the audacity to seek admission. I had been so engaged in my investigation of what was within reach, that I did not at first observe a heavy stone tablet, just above the keystone of the arch over the door; there was an inscription cut upon it, the letters lined by a growth of fine, dark moss which made them very legible. It simply read:

DOM PEDRO DEL ALAYA,
1647.

Above the name of Dom Pedro del Alaya was carved his coat-of-arms, lined with fine, dark moss, also its crown, and other heraldic devices quite distinct. "A person of great consequence, doubtless, this Dom Pedro," thought I; "but why he should have crossed the seas to make a home in the wilderness, who may know? for that stone, like the sphynx, is dumb."

But as noon approached the heat became oppressive, the soft south wind from the Gulf had died away, and I turned reluctantly from the old house, determined to know more of it, and with a strong presentiment that I should do so. As I walked slowly away, turning once or twice to take another look and impress its locality upon

my mind, I observed some two or three old houses—spacious, substantial structures, now mouldy with time and defaced by uses for which they had not been designed—wedged in between great, dingy warehouses, where cotton, rice, sugar and other southern products were stored, and like them, packed from basement to roof with the same sort of merchandise. These dwellings in their prime had, doubtless, been the only neighbors of the Del Alaya house, and had exchanged civilities with it; but progress and money-getting had been too much for their grandeur—they had been sold, and their owners had founded other elegant homes beyond reach of the noise and filth and vulgar contact of traffic, which had succeeded the stately quiet of their old neighborhood.

But the old Del Alaya house suffered nothing from the elbowings of the vulgar world that had driven off its friends; it was concealed, even from the prying eyes of curiosity, by the thick foliage of the great old trees that belted it in—all of it except the octagonal tower with a pointed roof that arose above their topmost branches on the side fronting the river. I could see from where I stood, that there were circular openings, like port-holes, just under the eaves of the tower roof, in and out of which a colony of crows fluttered and wheeled with discordant cries. Live oaks, with long, waving, gray mosses hanging from their branches like ghostly banners,

grew along the walls on the inside. The "Pride of China," with its purple, fragrant flowers, and the tall cotton-wood, orange and lemon trees, made a wilderness of shade and fragrance in those once carefully tended grounds; while tossing above the walls, out in the sunshine and air, as if in wanton delight of escape into the outer world, yellow jasmine and *salvatori* roses flung their vines laden with golden blossoms and great pearly clusters, warding back by their perfume the ill odors of the neighborhood from entrance into the sacred enclosure. That old house, I was convinced, had not only its traditions, but its unquiet ghosts. The heat reminded me that I had better stop "building castles in Spain," and get back to my hotel as quickly as possible, which I did with the aid of a cab that was passing, and which, by great good luck, was disengaged when I hailed it. It was nearly three o'clock when I reached my apartments; I made haste to change my apparel, jumped into a carriage and drove to Ridenour's, where I knew Raoul de Coucy would be waiting for me. My mind and imagination were full of the old Del Alaya house, and I meant, as soon as we should be quietly seated at our lunch, to ask Raoul no end of questions about it; what he could not tell me, he should find out from his old aunt or somebody else. But, alas! Raoul had invited two friends to meet me, men who were so full of the ordinary topics of the day, and the celebrated *dan-*

seuse Celeste, whose performance the evening before had thrown New Orleans into a fever of excitement, and about whose "poetry of motion" every one was raving, that I had no opportunity to ask a question about the matter that occupied my thoughts. Later on followed Madame de Vigny's *soirée*, after that a card-party at my rooms until after the "wee sma' hours," then to bed, too sleepy and perhaps a little too heavy with wine, to give further thought to the mysterious house hidden behind its impenetrable walls.

CHAPTER II.

CONTINUATION OF JOURNAL.

I WAS asleep when Raoul called the next morning; he would not allow me to be disturbed, and went off to his business. When I awoke, it was with a clear head, and one idea, the old Del Alaya house. It was becoming a monomania; why, I could not explain. After all that I had seen in the Old World, with interest it is true, but with little emotion, why should my mind and imagination be excited to fever heat by a musty old dwelling, to which, in all probability, people never gave a thought, except perhaps to wish it were pulled down, and the ground on which it stood levelled—an idea that was most practical and suitable to the times. After breakfast I ordered a light, open carriage, with a pair of high-stepping, fast horses, and drove down to the quays, hoping to find Raoul at his warehouse, and persuade him to drive with me to Lake Pontchartrain, intending to take the street on which the old house was situated on our way. He was there, standing in the arched stone entrance of his ware-rooms, an expression of mingled weariness and discontent on his countenance, his hands in his pockets, staring listlessly after a

line of heavily-loaded drays moving at a snail's pace toward the docks of the New York steamers.

"Hilloa! Max," he cried, as the horses dashed up over the rough stones, with no end of a clatter, while his whole face brightened with smiles, "you only want a pair of wings to convince me that you are a good angel come to visit me in this confounded lion's-den of a place. Here, some of you fellows! run and hold the horses. Step down, Max—"

"On the contrary, I want you to step up. I have come to carry you off, Raoul, if you will come. I want to see Lake Pontchartrain again, and am not sure of the way without you. Jump in. The air is just within an ace of being frosty: it is delicious and inspiring. The drive will do you good."

"I believe I will. I've got through with an awful lot of business this morning, sending off two immense consignments of cotton to New York, and my factor can attend to the rest; he's a faithful old Scotchman, and managed everything while I was in Europe—that is, after my uncle's death. Here, McDougal, I'm going on a short drive. I know you can spare me," said Raoul, with a light-hearted laugh.

"Hech, sirs; the time will be your only loss," said McDougal, who knew that Raoul was just learning the rudiments of the immense business, by which his uncle had amassed a splendid fortune, and that he, the factor, was now the soul

of it as much as if he were master. But he was old, and it was the desire of his life to see the young fellow, who had inherited all his former employer's possessions, fit himself to sustain the honor of the house, and carry on the business successfully after he should be gone.

"Business is an awful smasher to one's spirits. I wish I could get out of it, but I'm honor bound by the conditions of my uncle's will," said Raoul, as we drove off. Then we began to talk over the approaching festival of *Mardi-gras*, and the masquerading costumes we should select. We had decided on nothing except that our disguise was to be so impenetrable that we should be able to escape all recognition. Raoul was so engrossed by the subject of characters and costumes for the occasion, that he paid no attention to where we were going, until I turned the horses' heads into the street leading to the old house of Dom Pedro del Alaya.

"I say, Max, where in the mischief are you going? This is not the way to the Lake road, by a long shot. We're in the old Spanish quarter. Give me the reins, old fellow, and let us spin out of these close, filthy streets!" exclaimed Raoul.

"Presently. I want to find out something first. You have got to tell me all about that old house surrounded by walls, perched up yonder. Here we are. Can we get in, do you think?"

"How did you find this place, Max, and when?" he inquired, with a puzzled look.

"I was prowling about yesterday and came across it quite by accident, and I claim the right of a discoverer to explore it. Tell me what you know of its history."

"Upon my honor, I know very little. I had forgotten its existence, and as to getting in there, it would be as easy to get to the top of Mt. Ararat. The only person who has the 'open sesame' to the old den is Monsieur Moret's factor; and where he is, the witches only know," answered Raoul.

"Who is Monsieur de Moret?" I asked.

"The present proprietor, who lives abroad."

"It is gone from the Del Alayas then?"

"Not a bit of it; Madame de Moret was a Del Alaya in the direct line, and the last of them; she and Moret were betrothed when they were children by their parents, he being remotely related to the family. She died within a year of her marriage, leaving a son, the present heir. But what's the use of standing here in the sun? It will be more pleasant outside the city under the shade-trees; in fact, I shall be able to remember more when we get away from these vile smells, that disgust and confuse my memory."

"Go where you will, then, my Sybarite! I wish I had some attar-of-roses to sprinkle you," I said, laughing, as I gave him the reins, feeling quite satisfied that the train was laid for me to find out much that I wished to know.

"I wish to heaven you had, Max," he an-

swered, turning the horses' heads, and touching their flanks with the whip. They broke into a fast trot, and we were soon out on the smooth, grand drive leading to Lake Pontchartrain. Neither of us spoke until the wheels began to roll noiselessly over the level beaten road; then:

"She died, you say, leaving a son," I began.

"Who? Yes! I had forgotten. Max, you are as relentless as fate! Well, yes! She died within a year of her marriage, leaving a son, Léonce de Moret. I have heard that there was some hushed-up mystery, but no one could tell exactly what. There was a whispered rumor that there was another son, and that Madame de Moret had discovered something or other that broke her heart; and the family have lived abroad ever since, except when Monsieur de Moret comes now and again to look into his affairs. They are enormously rich, although one way or another a great deal of the Spanish property has slipped out of the hands of its successive owners, which is a very good thing in my opinion; it would have been too much for them had it held together—all that territory north and east of Louisiana, with a vast estate within the present boundaries of the State."

"Did you ever hear what brought Dom Pedro del Alaya here? That old house must have been built in, or on the edge of a primeval wilderness."

"It was, I have heard, built just about the

time that the Spaniards and French began to quarrel and fight over the right of ownership to the territory on the west side of the Mississippi, which both claimed, the feud lasting until the United States Government bought them out. Between them and the Indians, Dom Pedro del Alaya had cause to be thankful for his high walls and his watch-tower. The old Spanish records, I have heard my uncle tell, relate that he had large royal grants on both sides of the Mississippi, and there's a tradition also on record that he was disposed of in this royal fashion because he was, *sub rosa*, of such nearness of blood to his sovereign through a secret marriage of the Infanta's, as to make his absence from Spain not only desirable, but perpetual."

"The old house seems to be in a remarkable state of preservation."

"Yes; it was one of the conditions of the old Dom's will, I have heard, that it should be kept in good and thorough repair, and should be forever the home of his descendants, when they were not travelling across the seas, or they were to forfeit all claim to their inheritance of his possessions. Had I been one of the heirs, Max, under such restraints, I should have blown the ghostly old rat-hole up. I'd as lieve take up my abode in a mausoleum, or the Catacombs, do you know!"

"I don't doubt you in the least, Raoul. But what you have told me only heightens my desire

to get into it, and I mean to, by fair means or foul, with you to help."

"It's not a show-place, Max, and I can't imagine what in the mischief has got into you! One would suppose you'd had a revelation or something, about Captain Kidd's treasures being secreted there under some of the floors. I've heard that artists, who were wild to get in to see the statuary and paintings, failed to do so. Neither love nor money could open the doors for them. People here feel no interest in the rubbishy old place; nobody'd care if it tumbled to pieces to-morrow. There are many still living of our old French society, my aunt among them, who used to go there to formal dinners and grand entertainments, who, having seen its antique splendors, are satisfied to forget them, since they no longer contribute to their enjoyment."

"I must get in there, Raoul," I said.

"See here, Max Ashton, I've learned to know, since I first met you among the fiords of Norway, that whatever you set your mind upon you'll do. In this case I can only help you through De Moret's factor, who may be dead, or gone away, for aught I know. I'll have him hunted up if he's above ground, and if found, I am safe in promising that your wish shall be gratified. The summer before I went abroad, I pulled the old fellow through the yellow fever. I had joined the 'Howards,' you know, for want

of something better to do, and he fell to my care. He's a grateful old soul, and will be glad to do me a favor—that is, if he can be found."

"He's alive, and you'll find him, I have faith to believe. Now, for a swift trot to the lake."

"Where there are no haunted houses to explore, thank fortune, but brightness, and flowers, and fruits, and sweet smells, and the shade of great, moss-draped trees, where, I wager, we'll meet some of those beautiful girls we were introduced to at Madame de Vigny's last night, enjoying a picnic, and revelling like Naiads and Dryads among the wild roses and trailing jasmine. And—pleasant thought—we shall be invited to dine *al fresco* with them. Then, tonight—Celeste!—it is really too delicious to be real."

Raoul's expectations were more than realized, down, or up, to the felicity of seeing the famous dancer pirouette, float and twirl that evening until she seemed like a graceful aerial vision, then going wild over her performance to that degree that he helped to unharness her horses after she got into her carriage, and with a number of others, in whose veins flowed the best blood of Louisiana, drew her from the theatre to her hotel. I could not stand such a climax, and went back to my apartments disgusted; and when, later, Raoul came banging at my door to tell me how the Queen of the night had smiled, and thanked them, I pretended to be sound asleep. I was

reading a florid account of the affair in one of the morning papers, as I loitered over my breakfast, when Raoul came in, looking radiant; I was afraid he was going to tell me what a fool he had made of himself the evening before, and offered him but a glum welcome, which he quickly dispelled by saying:

“We’ve found him, Max, and you can see it.”

It was my turn to grow ecstatic when I understood that the “he” was Monsieur de Moret’s factor, who had neither gone away nor died, but was living quietly at the same boarding house he had abode in ever since he came to New Orleans, nearly forty years before. He had not heard of Raoul’s return until, at the latter’s request, old McDougal, who used to know him slightly, went in quest of him. Raoul had found him waiting to see him, when he got down to breakfast, and explained why he had sent for him. He not only consented at once to our seeing the interior of the Del Alaya house, but offered to conduct us there himself, so delighted was he to do anything for Monsieur Raoul and his friend—a thing wild horses could not have dragged him to do for anyone else. Would to-day suit, say 11 o’clock? if so, he would meet Messieurs there at that hour; the morning was the best time to see the pictures and things. “There,” added Raoul, snapping his finger and thumb together, like the boy he was, “how will that do?”

“Splendidly! You only want a little spurring

up to slay any dragon that obstructs your way! It is near eleven, and we mustn't keep your friend waiting. I'll just slip into my coat; hand me over my Panama hat from the sofa there, and we'll be off!" I exclaimed. Then Raoul and I went down, got into the carriage, and in a short time we were standing with the old factor, who awaited us there, before the great iron-studded doors of the entrance to Dom Pedro del Alaya's house and grounds. I was curiously on the alert to see by what means those heavy, massive gates were to be opened, but I only saw the old man rest his hand for a moment, as if for support, against the centre where they closed. Whether he pressed or touched a spring; I could not tell; I was sure, however, that I saw his right foot put down more vigorously than an ordinary movement required, at the same moment; then I heard the clangor of a distant bell. A minute or so passed, then the sound of rusty bolts, and a thud, as if the end of a heavy bar had dropped, were heard; the ponderous gates swung slowly open, creaking as they turned on their hinges, and we were invited to enter. But I looked around in vain for the porter who had withdrawn those bolts, and let down the heavy iron-cased bars; there was no one to be seen, and of course I did not feel at liberty to ask questions. There was a tangled jungle of osage-orange, which had once been a hedge, near the entrance, and I was satisfied that the porter had slipped behind

their impenetrable screen to avoid the presence of strangers.

“The ghost did it,” whispered Raoul, as we followed our guide, after he had readjusted the fastenings of the great gates, towards the house. There was a wide carriage road winding through the grounds, and on each side a broad, marble-flagged foot-way, now all grass-grown and neglected; and never did I see such a tangled wilderness of bloom and sweetness, everything growing wild and at will. Cherokee roses and the “Spanish dagger” mingled their flaunting blossoms side by side with the rarest and loveliest exotics, that were full of the rich beauty and languid aromas of the tropics; the white jasmine with star-like flowers clambered and hung in festoons over everything; the fountains were buried in roses of every hue, and citron trees veiled the naked statues. A peacock, his outspread plumage gleaming in purple, gold and green, strutted along a tessellated marble walk, his crested head haughtily erect, and his green and gold breast puffed out, as if trying to make up by his burnished splendors for his inability to cope in song with the brown mocking-bird that swung in the vines above him, pouring out his heart in wild, sweet bursts of melody, that he could never hope to imitate. Beyond all, belting the walls, and standing in groups, were the old stately trees with their trailing mosses, their fragrant blooms, and cream-white flowers. The house itself had

no architectural charm; built on a stone foundation which rose some distance above the ground, the octagonal tower, rising high above the roof, was the only thing that broke its square monotony; the crows that had been building under its pointed roof for years were flitting in and out, flapping their black wings in the sunshine, and sprawling upon the eaves with an air of proprietorship which no one disputed, their discordant cries of unrest throwing a more eerie spell over everything. All the shutters of the house were of solid wood, and closed, which added not a little to its grim aspect; under the pillared *porte-cochère*, broad marble steps led to the hall door, which was high, arched, studded with iron, and set between massive stone pillars like the one through which we had entered, except that upon this there was a massive knocker of bronze, a marvel of grotesque art, a mythological idea—its shape a winged serpent, covered with scales, with a beautiful human head, the face full of a strange pain as it looked wistfully into yours from between its small wings, as if entreating release from some evil spell. I could fancy that one might easily shrink from grasping that eerie-looking head to beat it against the hard metal against which it hung, but it was the only “open sesame” by which one could obtain admission, as our guide proved by giving several heavy knocks, which sent a shock of sound echoing through the stillness within. Presently we heard

a muffled scraping, then a tapping, then a wheezing cough, and a voice of complaint as a bar was lowered, and a ponderous key was turned with great effort in the lock; then the doors were slowly opened, revealing an old negress as black as ebony, who peered at us from under her yellow Madras turban with keen scrutiny, the darkness of her countenance relieved by the broad Guinea-gold rings that hung from her ears.

CHAPTER III.

END OF MAX ASHTON'S JOURNAL.

‘Hi, Chapita!’ said the factor, with a friendly nod.

She dropped an abrupt little curtsey, and spoke in a jargon of guttural and barbaric sounds, he answering her in the same unknown tongue; then she turned her eyes on us with a keen, searching glance, and waited in silence. The factor informed us that Chapita was, in the absence of the family, chatelaine of the establishment, an old and trusted servant who had nursed Madame de Moret in her infancy, and he might say until her last breath; that he had directed her to show us through the house, as he was compelled by a business engagement of importance to his employer's interests to leave us: she could only speak a few words of English, and no French, her language being a mixture of corrupt Spanish, African and Creole dialect, “but,” he added, “she is faithful, messieurs, and will carry out my orders to show you through the apartments.”

Here was a disappointment! Knowing how garrulous persons of her race are, and how proud of the wealth and consequence of their owners,

I had counted on gleaning from Chapita something of the traditions of the house of Alaya; but she might as well have been dumb so far as my designs in that quarter went. She barred and locked the door, and gave us a sign to follow her. Across the tessellated marble floor, in the centre of which stood an exquisitely carved marble fountain, now silent, its winged graces half shrouded in dust, we followed Chapita into a superb suite of apartments, which were separated by clustered pillars of tinted marble, which supported the graceful arches of the lofty ceiling; the walls were hung with invaluable paintings, great mirrors of antique form, and portraits of knightly men and rarely beautiful women. There were cabinets and tables, massive and black with age, rich in carving, inlaid with mother-of-pearl and sandal wood, and veined with gold; but a gray film of dust rested on every object. The floors, polished like a mirror, reflected the marble and alabaster statues that occupied every corner and niche, with such distinctness, even through the dust that spread unbroken its tissue veil over them, that, in the obscurity only relieved by rays of sunshine which stole through cracks in the shutters, their white forms looked like phantoms, family ghosts, reposing where their feet had once trod many a gay and stately measure. I noted rare vases and ancient treasures of art, crowded in rich profusion behind glass and upon slabs of mosaic that it

would have taken a week to examine in detail; so I passed them by with a glance only at their elegant forms, their workmanship and coloring being veiled, like all else, with dust. I was Vandal enough, at a moment when old Chapita's head was turned another way to watch Raoul, who was poking around a collection of antique medals, to write my name in the dust at the feet of a beautiful dame, whose dark, languishing eyes seemed to follow and fascinate me. The last room of the suite contained a large oriel window which opened on the grounds; it was small, and richly furnished in the modern style which we know. A portrait hung in each recess; the one to the right, of a small fair woman, not beautiful, but with a countenance full of wonderful sweetness and strange sadness, which appealed at once to one's human sympathies. She was attired in a robe of some diaphanous white fabric, and her profuse pale-brown hair was gathered up on the back of her head by a pearl comb, her only ornament, unless the rose that was drooping on her bosom could be so called. The other was the portrait of the handsomest man I ever saw. Dark hair, dark eyes full of fire, a face that would have been noble and chivalric but for the mouth, which was sensuous and weak, and neutralized to me the higher meaning of his physiognomy. It was a face I shall never forget; it is fixed indelibly on my memory. I looked towards Chapita, who

was watching me; she nodded in turn towards the portraits, and two words from her lips, "Madame and Monsieur," informed me with Raoul's help that I looked on the pictured faces of Monsieur and Madame de Moret. We followed Chapita into the hall, and up the broad, winding, mahogany stair-case, the balustrades of which were of brass, wrought into fanciful designs of great beauty, and worth a pilgrimage there to see even had there been no other rare, antique work of art under the old roof: she led us through apartments fitted up as for royal guests, their splendors half concealed by the filmy dust; and at last she paused before a closed door, hesitated an instant and gave us a sharp glance, which a little later I interpreted as an unuttered query as to our worthiness to enter the sacred precincts beyond. But she remembered her orders, and taking a key from her bosom, unlocked the chamber. "Lilly Madame's room," she whispered as she ushered us in. We might have known it by the exquisite and pure elegance of its appointments, its numberless refined, womanly touches, the pictures of angels and saints that glorified the walls; by that lace-draped shrine of the Virgin-Mother in an arched recess, at whose feet lay a cluster of yellow, withered flowers, probably the last she had placed there, where they had faded and perished as she herself had done—their sweet life exhaling, I hoped, heavenward in memory of the devout thought

they expressed. I felt strangely touched, and old Chapita's eye noted it I suppose; for touching my arm lightly with her finger, she made a sign that I should follow her, which I immediately did towards another recess opposite, but on the same side of the apartment, much wider and deeper than the one in which the oratory stood. Within it, quite covering the wall, I discovered a large painting, but I could not distinguish the subject, until Chapita, with a quick movement, threw open the shutter of a high, narrow window, which had evidently been cut there for the purpose of casting the right light on the picture to bring out its wonderful and masterly effects. I knew it at once from a small engraving I had seen of it in the museum at Seville, and a description I had read of it in a book of "Art Travels in Spain." It was a marvellously fine copy of Raphael's "Madonna del Spasimo;" to see which I had deferred leaving Spain on the very eve of starting homeward, and had journeyed across the rugged country in wintry weather, to the Escorial, but only to find disappointment when I arrived. The king was there, ill, and, as the painting was in his apartments, no one could be admitted. In vain all my pleading, my offers of gold, my proposed delay, if at the end of two weeks I might have a glimpse of the marvellous painting. My very eagerness helped to defeat my object; their replies savored of suspicion—they doubtless imagined I was a Carlist

spy with designs on the life of his sacred majesty, and the doors were shut in my face. But what a compensation to find it thus unexpectedly!

Was this the strange spell that had drawn me so strangely towards the old house of Dom Pedro del Alaya? As I gazed upon the masterly creation, copied evidently by a hand but little inferior to his who painted the original, my soul was touched by the deepest emotion; for in the presence of the great mystery of love and sorrow, unlike all other love, all other sorrows; that was there portrayed, I felt how faithless I had been, and how unworthy of a sacrifice so divine. "It was," to borrow the words of one who had gazed upon the original,* "a vivid representation of the Virgin's agony, when her divine Son, fainting under the weight of the cross, began to ascend the hill of Calvary! Never did I see such solemn depths of color, such majesty of character as here delineated. . . . Never was sorrow 'like my sorrow' so depicted in the Virgin-Mother's countenance and attitude; never was a sublime and God-like calm in the midst of agony, conveyed more closely home to the human heart than in the face of Christ! Here it was all faithfully depicted! The impression was overpowering.

It was here, before this realistic and touching scene, that the gentle lady who was mistress of all the worldly treasure I had seen, and untold

* Beckford, author of "Vathek," "Travels in Spain and Portugal," etc.

riches besides, used to bring her sorrows to offer them with the pain and sorrows of Jesus and His Virgin Mother. There stood her *prie-dieu* before it, there lay her rosary of garnet beads, and her missal with a crumpled yellow lace handkerchief, that looked as if it might have been thrust drenched with tears, between the pages, just where she had left them when she last knelt there, the same gray film of dust over them as over all else, except the painting of the "Madonna del Spasimo." Chapita, I suspected, had made this her care, knowing how much her "Lilly Mistress" loved to contemplate and pray before it—thinking, with one of the pretty superstitions of her race, that should she some time return when all was silent, and the night shadows wrapped the world, she would be glad to see it as her own devotional care had ever kept it. It was only an idea which was suggested by the fact that dust lay thick on every other object, the bed with its costly drapings of silk and lace, the dainty little crib beside it where the babe she left so soon used to slumber when not cradled in her arms! What business had we—strangers—in a spot so hallowed as this? No wonder old Chapita was loth to let us in.

"We will go," I whispered to Raoul.

"Just in time to save my life, Max! I am suffocating; in another moment I shall have asphyxia," returned my light-hearted Southern friend, to whom sunshine, air, and the bright side of nature, were essentials.

Chapita let us out by the way we came, after we had thanked her by laying some bright gold pieces in her ebon palm. We heard the creaking of rusty bolts, and the lumbering of heavy bars dropping into place, as the gates closed upon us. There must have been some cunning mechanism for opening and closing and securing these iron-ribbed portals, for that old creature could no more have done it unaided, than she could have moved a mountain. Once more we were beyond the old walls, in the bright, commonplace, everyday world.

Even the brilliant follies and mad fun of *Mardi-gras* could not obliterate from my mind the impressions made upon it by my visit to the old Spanish house, or from my soul the wondrous delineation of things which, to my shame, had been almost forgotten, but were so vividly recalled by the "Madonna del Spasimo."

Shortly after I got home, I received a letter from Raoul, which contained a piece of information of strange interest. "Cecile Layet, the beautiful quadron, has suddenly disappeared, leaving no trace behind her; she had no lovers, and lived like a *religieuse*; her old grandmother has gone raving mad, and been put under restraint; the mother, they say, is sullen, says but little, and will soon die with consumption, the disease of her race," So wrote Raoul, vexing my mind with problems difficult to work out.

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Years have passed since I wrote the above narrative in my journal, and the incidents I have related were fading from my mind, until now, strangely enough, I have been brought in contact with certain members of the family of Del Alaya, of whose fortunes and destiny the old Spanish house in New Orleans appears to be the centre. This I have noted, intending at some future time when I am at leisure to put the incidents which have occurred into narrative form.

So ends Max Ashton's journal, but for a cause which we will relate hereafter, he did not carry out his design, leaving it to other hands, who received the facts from his own lips.

CHAPTER IV.

“LET IT BE RECORDED.”

IN a sitting-room which was brightened by a sparkling wood fire and the sunlight that drifted through the fragrant plants that filled the windows, scattering golden flecks upon the floor, a fair girl, and a young army officer in undress uniform, were conversing pleasantly together. She was telling him that she was not yet quite sure that he, with his bronzed hairy face and broad shoulders, was the stripling brother who had gone South with his division four years since, his face as fair as a girl's, and in person almost as slender; “and,” she added, “whoever you may be, you are inches and inches taller than Dave.” But all the time she was saying this, there was a proud, loving look in her eyes, which told him that she knew he was her very own and only brother.

“I am pretty sure I should not have known you, Gerty, had I met you on the street, or in any other house than this, you've grown so. Why, you're quite a woman, and your pug nose has straightened itself out, and you've caught up with your eyes, which used to be such great, staring ones that I often wondered how you

managed to go to sleep! Altogether, I like the looks of you; but maybe you are not Gerty, but some far-away cousin who has been adopted in the family," he said, while his eyes twinkled with mischief and mirth.

"I must have been a fright," she said, laughing. "Your reminiscences go a little way; but have you no better proof to convince me that you are Dave?"

"Yes," he said, "I think this will settle the question." He drew a watch-guard from his breast, to which was suspended a small crucifix, a medal of the Blessed Virgin, and a little wooden cross, rudely fashioned, and inlaid with bits of mother-of-pearl, one of those which, blessed on the Holy Sepulchre, are indulged for the hour of death. He held them towards her.

"Ah, yes! You are no impostor," she said, kneeling beside him and holding them in the palm of her hand. "How well I remember that sad night of parting, Davy, when mother hung these around your neck; I thought surely the world was coming to an end, we were in such depths of grief—for you know, Dave, we never expected to look upon you living again. If these could only speak, I should know all the dangers you have passed; but they helped to keep you straight, didn't they?"

"Yes, indeed! without them I'm afraid I should many a time have forgotten," answered the young soldier, frankly, thrusting his treasures back into his breast.

"I expect you had hard times about your Faith, sometimes?" she asked.

"Yes, the fellows would chaff me about it, now and then; but when they saw it had no effect, they left off, and, on the whole, behaved well enough."

"Let me clean the medal and crucifix for you; they're as black as iron."

"No, indeed, thanks! Leave them so; they were with me in all the battles we fought, and remind me, by their stains and rust, of the merciful protection that guarded me from the deadly missiles that often darkened the air around us, when brave fellows were falling by hundreds, cut down in the morning and prime of life, at my side, before me, everywhere on those dreadful and hard fought fields. But let us talk of something else, Gerty. I want to hear something about father; do you know, I think he has aged very much, and has a care-worn look that I never saw on his face before. Has everything gone well with him?"

"Yes, and no! You know when the war actually broke out, real estate went down to zero; in fact, all values seemed to grow worthless for the time being. Of course, father was dreadfully cramped, and he thought he was ruined; our income was filed down to barely enough to provide us with the merest and plainest living; then what with anxiety about you, mother's health utterly failed, which affected his spirits still more,

and he lost immensely in southern securities—I really cannot explain it all, but father will, no doubt, when he talks over his affairs with you. But you know, things brightened up again, much of his property doubled in value, and we are getting on nicely, he tells me. Of course he could not retrieve many of his losses; but he is satisfied, since he has been able to satisfy his own creditors to the full value of their claims. Our father is a noble character, Dave; his troubles have only brought out his virtues in strong relief, and I should have said his calm trust in Divine Providence. He never failed to attend daily Mass, nor let any cause whatever interfere with his religious duties; and so, in the midst of his distracting cares, he found strength and consolation. I am so proud of father, Davy—he has a royal nature and an upright soul.”

The young soldier’s eyes filled with tears, his lips trembled, his heart swelled with emotion. he did not speak, but pressed Gerty’s hand in sympathy and approval of all she had said of the father they both so dearly loved.

“And so you see,” she went on, “although every one has been very kind, and mamma’s old friends have not only been constant, but have been very anxious to introduce me into society, I have begged off from time to time, and have managed to grow up very contentedly on the shady side of the world. Only think, Dave, I am nineteen! Things have got a little threadbare

about the house; carpets are faded, some of them are darned in a way that I consider artistic; the cushions and covers of sofas and chairs are shabby; but do you know, Dave, I'm as proud of our shabbiness as you soldiers are of an old, tattered battle-flag—both are signs of conflict and victory!"

"It is *home*," said Dave Warner, "and if it is all made as bright and pretty as this room, I don't see how it could be improved."

"Oh, Davy! if I told you how I have racked my ingenuity, and how wonderfully I have contrived to keep up appearances, you'd laugh! I have really become an expert upholsteress and cabinet-maker. I can plane, and saw, and hammer nails, and screw screws into things to keep them from tumbling to pieces, like a jack-of-all trades! You shall come into my workshop some day when I'm busy, to talk to me, and smoke; then you'll see what I've learned since you went away to the war."

"I had no idea what an accomplished sister I have—such a mingling of the *dolce* and *utile* in one young lady, is a marvel to me," he said, laughing.

"Come, Davy, don't be sarcastic," she answered, rising from his side, where she had been kneeling, and leaning upon the arm of his chair.

"Sarcastic! I never was more in earnest in my life; I uttered only a genuine tribute of admiration. You're a dear, noble girl, my Gerty," he

replied, looking fondly at her as she stood there in her young womanhood, blushing and smiling before him.

Gertrude Warner was not beautiful, but her soft gray eyes, her beautiful silky brown hair, the purity of her complexion, her fine, evenly shaped teeth and a dimple in her left cheek, formed an *ensemble* that was most attractive, especially when her face was lit up with smiles, or a pleased interest in anything she was reading or hearing. When at rest, her face was grave and thoughtful, and some said her mouth was too large, and her nose not fashioned in classic lines; but no one ever disputed the fact of its being full of expression, character and intelligence. So thought her brother, who had not seen her, until this morning, for nearly four years.

"And now," he said, "I want to hear about Uncle Max; I asked father and mother not to send him word I had come, for I mean to go to his den presently to give him a surprise. I do like to astonish folks."

"You'll succeed to-day to the 'top of your bent' I'm sure;" she answered, with a merry laugh. "Uncle Max has grown gray; I have heard mother say that he used to be a man of the world, and devoted to all its pleasures, until, some years ago, after spending several years in Europe, he came home entirely changed, and settled down to the secluded life he has led ever since. You and I always knew him just as he

is, and it's hard to realize that he could have once been a worldly and frivolous man of fashion, living astray from his faith, and giving all his time to the pursuit of such pleasures as irreligious men delight in. He's a very handsome man, is Uncle Max; and do you know Dave, mother and I both think that he was disappointed in love while he was abroad. You needn't laugh so incredulously, for why shouldn't Uncle Max have his romance as well as another? But he has just settled down into confirmed bachelor habits; he goes to church a great deal, and pays frequent visits to some clerical friends he has, at the Jesuits' College in Georgetown; it has even been whispered that he intends entering the priesthood, but no one knows, for Uncle Max never talks about himself."

"Whew! that is an astonishing piece of news. The dear old fellow! how I am longing to see him. I always thought, Gerty, there was no one in the world that could compare with Uncle Max; this is the first I've heard about his former life, and it surprises me by its contrast with all that I remember of him; but I shall see him presently. Meantime, tell me what has become of that wild, pretty little witch, Rose-Marie Hazelton? I suppose she's grown up into quite a fashionable young lady?"

"You are right. Rose-Marie is a young lady, and quite a belle; men pronounce her beautiful and bewitching, and she is really both. But

she's the greatest puzzle I ever saw; she minds little else than her own will. Her mother died soon after you went away, leaving a little boy-baby, whom Rose-Marie has undertaken the charge of, and, as might be expected, is spoiling entirely, I'm afraid—but she does not think so, and loves him dearly. Mr. Hazelton is absorbed in his profession, and lives almost in his law chambers, leaving her perfect mistress of his great, handsome house, servants, horses and carriage—but mercy! there she is, Dave, just coming up the front steps."

"I must run and get into my other coat, Gerty, before she comes in;" said Captain Warner, tossing his cigar into the fire.

"You shan't move," said Gerty, pressing her hand down upon his shoulder, to prevent his rising; "just wait; you do very well."

He had no time now to escape, for the door was thrown open and a young lady, dressed in the height of the fashion, was ushered in, her cheeks glowing, her fair hair blown away in many a golden tangle from her forehead, her lips half parted with a smile that revealed her white pearly teeth and her dimples, while at the same time there was a wide-open, astonished look in her brown eyes at sight of a handsome young officer, *tête-à-tête* with her friend. Gertrude ran to meet her, kissed her, then leading her forward said:

"Captain Warner, Miss Hazleton! Why, Rose-Marie, have you forgotten Dave?"

He bowed, not knowing but that her grown-up dignities required something awfully ceremonious.

"What nonsense! Dave Warner, shake hands!" she exclaimed, with a merry laugh. "Is it army style to snub old friends?"

"No, no indeed," he said, taking her hand in a hearty clasp, all reserve gone, "I am awfully glad to see you: am I expected to—to—kiss you?"

"I beg your pardon! What did you observe?" remarked the young woman, drawing herself up and throwing a blank look into her eyes, as if she had not heard him.

"Allow me," he said, handing her a chair, "I don't think I have seen you since the year I left West Point; and here you are a tall, fashionable young lady, ready to freeze an unsophisticated fellow just because"—

"He was impertinent," she interrupted, with a quick little toss of her head; "but I'll forgive you because you have been behaving so well down South that your friends are proud of you."

"What could you know?" asked Captain Warner, the quick blood mounting to his forehead. "I did nothing more than thousands of others."

"Well! maybe you don't believe it, but I *do* read the papers sometimes, especially the army news, and of course I see when any of my friends are gazetted for bravery on the field, and promo-

tion. But indeed I am glad to see you back, old Davy—safe and sound, so many fine fellows that I knew and liked have marched gayly away, and been killed. War is a sad sort of business, don't you think so?"

"I do indeed. I want to forget it for a little while."

"It is gay enough here to help you to do that. I'd like to introduce you to some of our set, for you must know that Gerty is such a prude that she won't go to the Germans, or any other of the delightful things that are going on."

"I shall have to put myself under your wing in that case, Miss Hazleton—"

"If you call me that I'll never speak to you again—"

"What then?" he asked, quietly.

"My name is Rose-Marie; you may call me so, if you like."

"I'm afraid I shall take to writing poetry if I do! Rose-Marie! Why it is music itself."

"Very well, do! I dearly love to have poetry written about me," she said, laughing. "Have you seen papa yet?"

"No, I only got home this morning at six. How is he?"

"Gradually turning to parchment. I can never get him to talk to me about anything I can understand, the few times I see him. Sometimes, by way of being very entertaining, he reads one of his arguments to me, and by the time he gets

through I feel idiotic. He lets me do as I please, but he doesn't dream of how much I need him, so I just have to fight my way along the best I can. Oh Gerty! how good it must be to have a brother!"

"It is indeed;—but you have a brother, Rose-Marie."

"I don't mean that sort of a brother, but a grown up man-brother. My brother, Captain Davy, is just five years old, the prettiest little outlaw that was ever seen! He will end by making me a lunatic. He threw my beautiful Venetian glass toilette set out of the window this morning—every piece! Of course there wasn't a bit of it as big as my finger-nail left. When I went into my room, very opportunely, there he was, balanced on the window-sill, screaming with laughter over the smash and glitter he had made on the pavement. I almost fainted when I saw his danger, but I crept up and caught him by his ankles and hauled him in."

"What happened then?" asked Captain Warner, highly amused.

"Do you really want to know? Well, he roared and I—spanked him; then he screamed and sobbed in such a way that I hugged and kissed him, and gave him the loveliest box of French confectionery, that had been left with a charming *billet-doux* for me, about an hour before. It was sent, too, by that enchanting foreigner, that every one is raving about."

"Why don't you drown him? he'll certainly turn your hair white," asked Captain Warner.

"Who—the foreigner?"

"No: your little outlaw. It would be better for him than that sort of management."

"Oh! you cruel creature! Why he's the dearest, loveliest child you ever saw! If you were only to see him in the beautiful Highland suit I've just had made for him, with a real eagle's plume that is fastened in his *Glengary* bonnet, with a great cairngorm clasp, you'd think he was one of Fra Angelico's angels."

"Dressed as a Highlander! That's a new and refreshing idea, I declare!"

"Gerty," said Rose-Marie, "do you hear how your brother is laughing at me? Come and talk to me, or I'll go. You have not said three words to me since I came in, and Captain Warner does nothing but contradict me."

"I have not had the ghost of a chance to get in a word, you know I haven't," said Gerty, laughing. "But who's your new friend, the foreigner? That will do to begin with."

"Oh, he's splendid! It is understood that he's a person of rank and title, but prefers to drop all that while in this country, which I think is modest, and in good taste. Don't you?"

"Very," answered the young officer; "most excellent taste, if his reasons for so doing will bear inspection."

"Davy Warner, will you please to hold your

tongue? I wish to tell Gerty something. He's very rich, and oh, so handsome!" she went on; "and he is spending the winter here with his mother, who, by the way, does not go into society. She's a devotee, and I see her very often in church, her pew being near ours. She wears black all the time—black velvet, and a black lace scarf thrown over her bonnet, like the Spanish women wear their veils; and the only jewelry she ever has about her is a diamond cross, the stones as big as the tip of my finger; it slips out sometimes, and it flashes so when it catches the light, you'd think there was a rainbow somewhere around. And she's the most beautiful woman I ever saw; such great, soft, black eyes; and her features are like something chiselled—"

"She *is* remarkably beautiful. I have also noticed her in church, but her face is a very sad one," answered Gerty.

"Yes, it is. She always reminds me of the Mater Dolorosa," said Rose-Marie, in gentle tones.

"You are very fond of foreigners, aren't you?" inquired Captain Dave, in a conciliatory tone.

"Oh, yes, indeed! There's something so romantic about them, and their manners are so refined and polished, and they are always so deferential to ladies. They'd think it the worst form to even attempt to snub a lady," she replied, with a saucy smile.

"What angels they must be—how perfectly irresistible!" he answered, laughing; determined she should not see that he understood her covert reproach.

"Of course they are," she answered, resentfully. "I intend to marry a foreigner. Nothing would induce me to marry an American; they have got entirely too good an opinion of themselves, and are so self-assertive that it borders on vulgarity; don't you think so, Gerty?"

"No; I do not," that young lady flared out; "I think they're the bravest, truest, best men on the face of the earth; and if I can't marry an American, I'll be an old maid."

"You will?"

"Yes, I will."

Rose-Marie laughed merrily. "You are witness, Davy. Your sister will marry only an American; I will marry only a foreigner. *Let it be recorded.* Now I must go. I receive my friends day after to-morrow from four to six, and mean to have dancing; won't you come with Gerty?" she said, holding out her hand to her old playmate, as she rose to go.

"Thanks; yes, we will come with pleasure," he said, holding her hand for an instant in the warm, honest clasp of his own. Then the girls embraced each other, and Rose-Marie flitted out into the sunshine, to make other calls.

"That girl has good metal in her. I don't believe she's as frivolous at heart as she ap-

pears;" said the young soldier, settling himself in his chair, and lighting a fresh cigar; ' and she's rarely beautiful; but I tell you, Gerty, I'm afraid she has an immense capacity for getting into scrapes of one kind or another."

"I hope not. Even should she do so in her thoughtlessness, I assure you she has spirit enough to get out of them. Rose-Marie has a sweet, affectionate nature, too."

"She's a Catholic, I suppose?" he asked.

"Oh, yes indeed! she stands up for her Faith; but, I'm sorry to say, does not devote as much time as she might to the practice of it. She's very gay and devoted to society; but she'll weary of its pleasures when she finds how monotonous they are. She has grown up without restraint into the sweet wild rose you see."

"She's a revelation to me," said Captain Dave, leaning back his head, and watching a delicate, spiral thread of smoke floating upwards.

"Take care, dear old fellow; don't get too much interested in Rose-Marie, for you heard what she said about marrying a foreigner; and I must tell you she is a great flirt."

"Is she? Very well, I will heed your warning, Gerty. I'll run up and sit a half hour with mother, then I'll go to see Uncle Max."

"Do, Davy, dear. You know I'm house-keeper, and I have no end of things to do to-day."

"What may they be?" he said, throwing his arm around her, and kissing her fondly.

“Well, this is inspection day, and I have my house accounts to look over; then, orders to write, and a pudding to make,” she answered, laughing. Then she said: “Oh, Davy, it is good to have you here at home, safe and sound!”

CHAPTER V.

UNCLE MAX.

CAPTAIN WARNER had a fine, military figure, and his face, as seen between the visor of his cap and his heavy, brown moustache, was so attractive in its manly style of feature and expression, that, as he walked down Pennsylvania Avenue, there was many a whisper among the fashionable groups he met, of: "Who is he?" "He's a new comer!" "How handsome! I do hope he's to be stationed here." "So do I, for they've ordered nearly all the young officers off." "Oh, do you know him, Rose-Marie?" exclaimed another, as the young officer marched along, intent only on reaching his uncle's apartments in the shortest possible time, and utterly unconscious of the curiosity he excited, or that he was known to a single individual in the passing crowd, until a sweet, clear voice rang out: "How dy'e do again, Captain Warner?" and he had just time to lift his cap, as Rose-Marie Hazelton, with a bevy of gay girls, flashed by, going the other way. He turned off the avenue, and soon found himself in the neighborhood of the City Hall, in sight of the old, well-remembered quarters, so interwoven in his boyish memories,

where his uncle Max Ashton, a lawyer of good standing, "only a little lazy," his legal friends said, had his abode. A medium-sized, old-fashioned, two-story brick house it was, his office in front, his library and living rooms back; for he hated going up stairs, and occupied the first floor entirely, giving the use of all the other rooms to a struggling young lawyer with a wife and child, refusing any equivalent other than their having the premises kept in good order. For himself, he had his own servant, who attended to all his wants. "It was just like Ashton," his friends said; "he might have rented those rooms profitably for offices; but he's an odd fish."

Captain Warner ran up the steps, went in and tapped on the office door. No response. Then, opening it softly, he looked in; the room was empty.

"The Law," thought Captain Dave, "is taking lunch," and, knowing the ways of the bachelor's establishment, he stepped across the floor, and, pushing open the middle door, saw Mr. Ashton seated at a table enjoying his newspaper and his oysters together; a man in the prime of life, his close-cut gray hair showing a finely-shaped head, his face full of intellectual force and wearing a habit of deep thought that tinged it with sadness.

"Good afternoon, sir!" said the intruder, lifting his cap.

"Good day!" responded Uncle Max, wondering at the audacity of this military stranger, who intruded so unceremoniously on his privacy, and not too well pleased thereat.

"I beg your pardon for calling at so inopportune a time, but I wanted——"

Here something familiar in the tone of the stranger's voice made Mr. Ashton look squarely into his face, and there he saw an expression dancing in his eyes, and around his mouth, which made him lay down his knife and fork, drop his newspaper and exclaim:

"What! Can you be Dave Warner?"

"Indeed, I am he, and nobody else! How do you do, Uncle Max?"

A chair was upset, and a warm hand-clasp and embrace followed; then, with a short gruff cough, as if something had risen in his throat, Uncle Max said: "I'm glad to see you, my boy. Sit down. Fighting seems to agree with you; I never saw a fellow so grown to sudden manhood in my life. I'm very glad to see you, Dave."

"Well, sir, it shows how good a thing fresh air, plenty of exercise, and plain fare is, for a youngster's constitution; it wasn't often I saw a spread like this, in my four years' campaigning."

In a little while, after partaking of the good cheer before him, urged by the hospitable attentions of Uncle Max, who evidently thought his appetite could never be satisfied after years of

camp fare, Captain Dave Warner pushed back his plate and begged off. Then they began talking—the one questioning, the other in reply giving an account of himself and “the perils he escaped by flood and field,” which he would have much preferred not to speak of then, as it involved mentioning himself oftener than was agreeable to his modesty; but Uncle Max would hear it all, and was not to be put off.

“Thanks be to God! you are safe so far; but how you managed to go through it all, is a wonder. I’m very glad to see you, old fellow! But see here, Davy, my boy! is all right every way with you? There are great temptations in army life, and a man requires no end of courage to keep the Faith.”

“I believe I have fought my way through without ever betraying that, Uncle Max, and I have acquired no bad habits,” replied the young officer with a grave, sweet smile; “I put myself under the protection of our Blessed Lady, and have always worn her image as her true knight.” He had never had any reserve with Uncle Max, and now opened his heart to him, as frankly as when he was a boy.

“That’s good news, the very best! I’m not a saint myself, but I’ve lived long enough to know that a firm grip on one’s faith, and what it teaches, is the very best safeguard a young fellow can have; it helps above all, to elevate and ennoble his character. But there’s another thing

I'd like to know. You haven't gone and fallen in love, have you?"

"No, indeed!" answered Captain Dave, with a hearty laugh. "I've had no time. I was longer in New Orleans than anywhere else, after it was occupied by our troops, but it was like a 'banquet hall deserted' by the beauty and brightness that once filled it; all had streamed away into the Confederate lines, when our guns were heard thundering along the river."

"Were you long there?"

"Not quite a year. I got tired of inaction, and was transferred to Sherman's army."

"How upon earth did you amuse yourself while you did stay?"

"I found enough to occupy my mind; every day something, either tragical or amusing, happened. I explored the beautiful drives, the old cemeteries, and the quaint, narrow streets. The cathedral was not closed, and we had Mass every morning; and, now and then, I had curious adventures."

"New Orleans is a good place for that," said Uncle Max, quietly.

The servant came in, just then, to put on more coal, remove the dishes, and light the sperm candles in the old-fashioned silver candelabra, which he placed on the table with cigars, matches, and the evening papers, and retired.

"I detest gas," said Uncle Max, "it's such a symbol of the glare and unwholesomeness of

what we know as modern progress. Light a cigar, Davy, and let me hear something about your adventures."

"They're hardly worth repeating, sir; little, trifling affairs, that helped to while a few hours away by the momentary interest they excited, except one, which was connected with a strange old Spanish house, in what is known as the Spanish quarter—not that any Spaniards live there, but because it was built ages ago by an old fellow who had large grants of land on both sides of the river, from his sovereign, the King of Spain. It dates before the time the French and Spanish began their squabbles about the boundary line."

"Yes; the old Del Alaya house: I remember it well. I went all over it once, and my visit gave a strange turning-point to my life. Anything about it will be of great interest to me," said Uncle Max, whose countenance expressed both curiosity and emotion.

"I had noticed the old house once or twice on passing it to attend to some military duty, which left me only time to wonder why it was walled up in that sort of style, but I thought no more about it, until one day I was returning from the picket line where I had been on duty all night, and I took the street it stands on as a short cut to my quarters, when, as I approached, I heard a shrill, prolonged shriek—a woman's voice as if in extreme terror. I halted and looked around.

To my surprise, I saw that the great gates in the wall were open. As I stood an instant longer, wondering where that shriek came from, another piercing and prolonged cry rang out; and, directed by the sound, without a thought of what I might be running my head into, I dashed up the old, rickety steps, through the gates, and found myself in the grounds, staring blankly around; for everything was as quiet as a neglected graveyard, and as overgrown with every imaginable sort of shrubbery, vine, and young tree—a perfect jungle, impossible to penetrate. I determined to remain a moment or two longer, then hurry to my breakfast if there should be no repetition of those sounds of terror and distress. I had not long to wait. Another outcry, like the shriek of a maniac, broke the silence. Whatever outrage or crime was being perpetrated, it was within that closed-up, mysterious-looking old house. I lost no time in getting to the hall door, and pounding the knocker until I heard its echoes thundering along the silent walls; but no one answered. The shrieks became wilder and more frequent. I ran round towards the rear, and saw an open side-door, leading into a passage way, which connected the main building with the offices. I had my revolver and sword, but I really did not think of either at the moment, I was so excited. I ran into the house, and, guided by the shrieks, after no end of turnings and windings I came to a door, under a staircase,

from which a steep flight of stone steps led into what appeared to be a cellar, but was in reality a huge stone basement, with narrow grated windows just under the ceiling. I leaned forward and listened, for the cries had suddenly ceased; and I was just in the act of turning away, when a shuddering, unearthly scream, that seemed to penetrate my very marrow, arose from the black depth below. I was seized with a sort of panic, and thought only of escaping from the spot, but I had retreated only a few steps, when more manly impulses prevailed, and whispering a 'Hail Mary' I went back, and plunging down the steps saw by the dim light that filtered through the cobwebbed iron gratings over the narrow windows, a sight that chilled my blood with horror. A frightful old negress, her white wool standing in a bush all over her head, sat upon the stone floor, supporting against her breast the head of a young man, whose closed eyes, pallid features, and motionless limbs, showed every appearance of death, while the blood that stained the woman's breast and garments, and his linen, told me that a deed of violence had been committed."

"Old Chapita," said Mr. Ashton.

"Yes; that was her name, I heard afterwards; but she could not speak English except a few words, and no French. All she had at command was in intolerable gibberish that was perfectly unintelligible, which she poured out in torrents

of what might have been words, but the only thing I could at all make out was a name, the name of Léonce, which she repeated over and over again, looking down every time into the beautiful marble face that lay so unmoved and silent upon her breast. With one hand she turned his head very tenderly, and just far enough for me to see a frightful wound near the back of it, above the ear, on the right side. I felt his pulse, and his heart, and after some little time discovered a faint pulsation. I drew out my flask and let some drops of brandy trickle into his throat; in a few minutes the white lips quivered, there was a slight gasp, his eyes opened, but they were dull and heavy, without the slightest sign of intelligence or recognition. I could have sworn that I saw this very man not an hour before on board our mail-boat, just as she steamed away from the landing, where I had been on guard all night. If this was he, how did he get here? It was impossible—for did I not see him carried off in the mail-boat which steamed straight down the river, without stopping at any other point in the city? It was the most extraordinary likeness I ever saw. I was attracted by the wonderfully classic beauty of his face, and his distinguished air, which made him conspicuous among the people of all sorts and complexions that crowded the landing. Who was he, and who was this? Had I been a German, I should have concluded that he was the 'double' of the

poor fellow lying here nearly murdered. There was no time for speculation. I hastened away to fetch our surgeon, making the old woman understand by signs that I was coming back with help. I left her crooning her gibberish over him, in tender, lullaby tones, as she chafed his hands, and so found her when Doctor Spencer, accompanied by two of our men, strong Irishmen, and myself, returned in an ambulance, with bandages, lint, medicines and a stretcher. The doctor, after hearing what I could tell him of the case, had gathered up and brought everything, including wine and brandy, that he thought would be needed. As quickly as willing hearts and strong hands could do it, the poor young fellow was removed, under the guidance of Chapita, to a large, richly-furnished bedroom up stairs, where his wound was examined and attended to as carefully as could then be done. Two or three of our most skilful surgeons, by Doctor Spencer's request, met him in consultation, and were in daily attendance with him on the case; but while there was no inflammation, and the patient's physical condition perceptibly improved, mind, memory and consciousness remained a dead blank. Our general took great interest in the affair, having been a distinguished criminal lawyer before the war, and under his instructions a strict investigation was instituted, but nothing could be ascertained to clear up the mystery of the crime. The factor of the estate was nowhere

to be found, but an old African, who had straggled into our lines—a real old Congo native—was suddenly thought of by some one who had noticed him lounging about in the sunshine, and it was suggested that he, perhaps, would be able to understand Chapita's lingo. He was forthwith hunted up, and acted as our interpreter. But Chapita was wary and suspicious. She evidently put no trust in 'niggers,' and it would have been diverting to see her airs and scowls and flirts, when she understood what the poor old contraband was brought there for. He understood what she said, and she understood him; it was the same jargon, that sounded like a big coffee-mill grinding, and set one's teeth on edge to hear it. It was only, however, after our repeated assurances that whatever she told us should bring no harm to Léonce, and that we only wanted a clew to find out and punish the miscreant who had sought his life, that she was induced to give us the meagre facts in her possession. 'Léonce,' she said, 'was the son and heir of Monsieur de Moret, who went away soon after his wife's death. He lived in Paris. He came back to New Orleans sometimes, but always left the boys at school over there. They never came until after he died, and Léonce, the heir, along with Eugène, his brother.' Here Chapita, with a grimace of utter disgust, paused, and her eyes sparkled with deadly hate.

"'But,' we asked, 'had Monsieur de Moret two sons?' She nodded her head.

“‘Only one, Léonce, was Madame’s child, the other—’ again she made a grimace of expressive contempt. ‘It was that kill her, my Lilly Missus,’ she went on to tell us through our contraband. Not another word could we get out of her on this point; we could only guess. Seeing it was hopeless to try and get her to tell us anything she felt bound to withhold, we did not urge it, but bade her go on. The fiery passion had died away out of her eyes, leaving a sort of dumb grief behind, which changed their whole expression.

“‘One week ago,’ she said, ‘tell the Linkum sojers, *you*, one week ago, they come, Léonce to his inheritance, and the other one, Eugène, along with him. An’ you’d thought they was children of the same mother, they was so much alike, and loved each other so. But yesterday they had high words. I heard them, but couldn’t understand what they said. It was outlandish talk, an’ I couldn’t make it out. I didn’t see Eugène any more, nor Léonce till I went down the cellar next mornin’ to look for my cat, and there he was, jest like *you*,’ she said, putting her claw-like fingers on my arm, ‘found him.’ All at once I recollected the handsome stranger I saw on the landing, who went away in the mail-boat, and how I was struck by the great resemblance between the wounded man and himself. It was no doubt, Eugène, flying from the consequences of his crime, if crime it was. We could not tell;

there might have been foul play, but there was no proof. The wine closet was in the cellar, and Léonce might have started to go down to bring up a bottle of some favorite vintage, and, missing a step, or catching his heel on the edge of one, lost his balance, and fallen headlong over the side, which had no railing or other protection, in which case the wound in his head was easily explained. His wallet, filled with notes, and certain papers of high value, was in the breast-pocket of his coat; his costly watch and large diamond cuff-buttons remained undisturbed; whatever, then, may have been the *motif* of the crime, if crime it was, it was not plunder. However, Léonce de Moret lived on from day to day, but consciousness did not return as he grew better, nor did he speak; the faculty of speech seemed gone. He was one of the handsomest fellows I ever saw. Our general had a guard stationed on the premises, and old Chapita took care to double-lock every door in the house, and conveniently lose the keys. Some of us were very curious to have a peep into those closed apartments, judging from the little we saw outside of them that they were well worth investigation; but there was no way by which our desire could be gratified except violence, and as we were not the marauders and robbers we have been represented to be, we gave it up. I was transferred about this time, with several others, to General Sherman's command; but I heard

some time afterwards that the surgeons who had attended Léonce de Moret, and were deeply interested in his case, had sent him to New York, in charge of one of their number whose term of service had expired, to place him under the care of Doctor Brown-Sequard, a celebrated French surgeon who was spending a few months in that city. There was no one to interfere with the plan, and his wallet contained greenbacks and papers of large money value, much more than would be needed for his expenses. I heard also that the quaint old Spanish house had been restored to the care of Monsieur de Moret's factor, who, after the first panic caused by the occupation of the city by the Federal troops had subsided, returned, and after representing his case satisfactorily at headquarters, the property had been restored unconditionally to his guardianship."

"It was a remarkable affair," said Mr. Ashton, knocking the white ashes from the end of his cigar with his finger, and speaking slowly. "I believe there was crime under it. What did the factor say?"

"I have never heard. Sometimes I think it was crime and not accident that has doomed that fine young fellow to a 'death-in-life' sort of existence. Old Chapita said he and his brother came together, but if so, no one saw the latter, or a trace of him, unless the fellow I saw get on the mail-boat that morning was he. I guess she was

half beside herself, and talked wildly. I forgot to mention something else a friend wrote me. He said that the factor was as much at sea about the affair as any one; he had not seen M. de Moret's sons since their earliest childhood, and could not on his oath say whether the wounded man was the true heir, or the other son. His likeness to his father's portrait was remarkable, but that did not meet the question; for once, when the lads were about eighteen years old, Monsieur de Moret, on one of his visits home, had shown him their photographs, and they were enough alike to be twins, and both the image of their father. 'This unfortunate young man may be Léonce, or he may be Eugène; I could not swear. As to Chapita, she knows no more than I do. She never saw either of the children after Monsieur de Moret took them away. She's half crazy, I think,' the factor added. I believe now I have told you everything; the old factor's opinion (I had entirely forgotten it) only deepens the mystery," remarked Captain Dave.

"How strangely, what you have told me revives my recollections of the old house of Del Alaya! I visited it years ago, and wrote a description of the impressions I received in my journal, which I'll read to you, if you care to hear it—well, presently. I was a wild fellow, devoted to the pleasures of the world, as men weigh them, and had quite shaken off the restraints imposed by the practices of

our holy Faith. I was just drifting into the sophistries of Kant, whose works, in my love for philosophical research, I was devouring. I had studied Spinoza, and some of the lesser lights of infidelity, and, without knowing it, my faith was undermined; my will, only too glad of license, involuntarily delighted in what I then thought broad, rational, liberal teachings, worthy of the true dignity of man. I never entered a church. Sometimes, in memory of my mother's love, I said an *Ave*, that was all. But in the old Del Alaya house I was suddenly confronted with a wonderful painting, one of Raphael's inspired canvases, the 'Madonna del Spasimo,' which, in an instant, tore away the veil from my heart and revived my dying faith. As I gazed upon it, the edifice of false, infidel opinions I had built up, crumbled to very dust in the presence of those immense sufferings, which were represented with such realistic art, that I trembled, as I gazed, at the thought of their having been borne for me—yes, *for me!* I was overwhelmed by my ingratitude, my faithless betrayal of a divine trust, my sins! By the mercy of God, my mad career was arrested, and I lost no time in seeking reconciliation with Him through the divine Sacraments, resolved to retrace my steps and atone, by a life of penitence, for my sin. You see, Davy, I am turning my heart inside out to you, old fellow, thinking it may help you to avoid the like pitfalls, should

you be so tempted. Since then I have lived as now; your mother and the rest of them rate me soundly for my eccentricities; my best friends say I'm a crusty old bachelor, and that my excuse is 'a disappointment in love,' which is their mistake. They bring every art their wit and ingenuity can invent to rout me out of my hermitage here, but I am satisfied to let them enjoy their own opinion, and pursue my object without revealing it. One of these days I shall astonish them. It's very pleasant to have you to talk to, Davy," said Uncle Max, whose eyes rested with proud affection on the manly countenance of his nephew, who was greatly touched by the confidence reposed in him. Mr. Ashton unlocked his desk and took a roll of manuscript out of a drawer, then, having resumed his chair, he opened it, and read aloud the description of his visit to the Del Alaya house, with which we are already acquainted.

CHAPTER VI.

ROSE-MARIE.

CAPTAIN WARNER and Gerty—she very proud of her brave, handsome brother—went to Rose-Marie's *matinée-dansante*, as they had promised, and found the large drawing-rooms thronged with the fashion and beauty of society—that is, the younger portion of it, for only unmarried persons had been invited. The army and navy were represented by a sprinkling of young officers, stationed at the capital and at the navy-yard; civil life, by exquisites whose time vibrated between the clubs, social enjoyments, and other pleasures common to their class; the *jeunesse-dorée* of the various legations were in full force, with their pleasant airs and graces, impressing the imagination with a flavor of foreign courts, and inspiring all sorts of dreamy romances in the minds of youthful *débutantes*.

The Warners could not at first reach Rose-Marie, on account of the crowd; but Captain Dave, his head towering above every one else's, had her in full view, as she stood just within the drawing-room door, receiving in a graceful, genial way, which made each one of her guests feel that he, or she, was the specially favored

one, as she greeted them with pleasant words, and many ripples of laughter, by way of emphasizing her welcome. The air was full of a subdued, yet glad sound of voices, which mingled pleasantly with strains of music from the ball-room, where the dancing had already begun, and towards which every one was hastening. How lovely the young hostess looked in her dress of pale blue, with filmy lace falling in diaphanous folds over the rich silk; her ornaments rare opals, which fastened her soft sheeny hair, encircled her throat, drooped from her small ears, and wound themselves about her fair, rounded arms, their imprisoned fires flashing and glowing with every movement. She had been often told that there was a fatality about opals, that they were stones of ill-omen; but it was like the perversity of her nature to like them all the better on account of the superstition attached to them. A fashionable old woman, who had grown wise, as well as gray in the service of the world, and who had heard the opals talked of, whispered in her ear one evening at a ball: "Don't mind what they say about your jewels, for it is all envy, my dear, sheer envy. Wear them all the same—they are magnificent!—and enjoy the rage it puts them in to know they are yours, and not theirs." Rose-Marie laughed, and from that hour her opals found new value in her eyes. Not that she was in the least ill-natured, but she enjoyed keenly a little spiciness mixed with the common-

place of existence, to prevent its growing flat, and drearily monotonous.

But the arrivals that had preceded the Warners and blocked their way had moved on, and Rose-Marie caught sight of them as they came towards her. She stepped forward to meet them, both hands extended, and her face dimpling with smiles of welcome.

"I was afraid you were not coming," she said. "I am so delighted, Gerty!—you look like a picture, in that love of a bonnet! You must tell me the name of your milliner, for I've seen nothing half so pretty this winter."

"I'll tell you with pleasure," said Gerty, laughing, as she leaned forward a little, and whispered: "myself."

"Tell it not in Gath!" exclaimed Rose-Marie; "I thought it must be fresh from Paris. Ah! here is my cousin, Mr. George Eaton, from New York. How dy'e do? Allow me to introduce Mr. Eaton to you, Miss Warner. Be sure you make yourself agreeable, George, for she's the dearest friend I have in the world."

He bowed, smiled, promised, and invited Miss Warner to go see the dancers, which she was glad to do, for, although she did not care to dance herself, she liked to watch the poetry of motion, as it gracefully kept time with delicious music, the pretty faces flitting by, the variety of coloring and shades in the dresses, all forming together a complete harmony of sound move-

ment, and tint. As Gerty and Mr. Eaton walked away, Rose-Marie said: "Oh, Davy! why didn't you come sooner? If you had only come just a little sooner, you would have seen him; he's just gone—had another engagement. Wasn't it good of him, though, to run in for a moment? Oh, I was so provoked that he had to go!"

"Who? what?" asked Captain Warner, mischief twinkling in his eyes, yet half bewildered at her vague speech.

"That lovely foreigner I promised you should see, you know. Oh, I'm so sorry!"

"Not for me, I hope, for I really think I shall be able to survive it. In case I should faint or anything, have you any smelling-salts handy?" he answered, gravely.

A saucy rejoinder was on her lips, but at the instant a fresh arrival of guests claimed her attention—two pretty young *debutantes* and a gentleman, who, having received her graceful welcome, and being placed quite at ease by her pretty little speeches, passed on towards a group of friends they had recognized at the other end of the room.

"I should have introduced you, Davy—is it quite right for me to call you so? I always used to, you know."

"Yes, of course. I like it," he answered heartily.

"Well, I should have introduced you to those pretty girls, but I mean you to stay here until I

can leave my post. Perhaps there'll be no more arrivals, but I'm not sure. I shall be able to get to the ball-room presently, and I intend that you shall waltz with me first thing."

"Waltz! Really! Do you waltz?"

"Do I waltz? Of course I do. How could I exist without waltzing?" she asked, in pretty amaze.

"Oh! is that so? I only thought the Church had tabooed that sort of dance."

"That's all nonsense. The Church has said nothing about it. It's only some of the clergy who have made a fuss about it. I don't scruple about waltzing one bit, therefore I don't take it to confession. If I thought it were a sin, I would; but I don't. And then you know it's such fun," she rattled on.

"Oh! And so you enjoy it?"

"*Immensely!* Come, there's my favorite Strauss; it is perfectly irresistible!"

"But see here—upon my honor I don't know how to waltz," he interrupted, really frightened at the prospect of making a spectacle of himself.

"Not know how to waltz, Davy! I must say your education has been awfully neglected," said Rose-Marie, opening her beautiful eyes to their widest extent. "But I don't believe you."

"It is a fact. For pity's sake don't insist on my making a fool of myself, by attempting what will only end in failure," he pleaded.

"Come, Davy, a few steps will set you all

right. Of course you'll be just a little awkward at first, but that's nothing. It's considered *distingué* to be awkward in dancing; it attracts attention, it makes one seem indifferent to everyone else's opinion; it is quite the thing, I assure you, so come on."

"But I suppose," said the young officer, pushed to the last extremity, his face flushing up to his temples, "I suppose if a fellow has had his leg splintered by a ball, and has not quite got over it, it will go for something of an excuse."

"Is that true, Davy? How delightful! I didn't know you had been wounded. Well, I'll have to let you off from waltzing, then, but you'll have to limp, just a little bit, you know, to let everybody know I've got a hero on my hands," said she, with a bewitching smile.

"I want to tell you something, Rose-Marie," he answered, fixing his serious eyes upon her; "my broken leg is certainly a good excuse; but upon my honor, even had I not met with such an accident, I would not waltz or attempt to learn, to please any one."

"And why, pray?" she asked, in pretty wonder.

"Because I hold the virtuous of your sex in such reverence," he said, in a low tone.

"A modern Roland!" she said, with a graceful courtesy; but the words sunk into her heart. She was frivolous, but not as much so as she seemed. The religious education she had re-

received at her convent-school, the principles of her faith which had been planted and cherished there, were not yet quite choked up with weeds; the germs were struggling for life, it is true, but were not yet extinguished by the insidious, deadly miasms of the world. In her heart there were chords not yet rusted, however they might be out of tune, and these, when touched, sometimes gave forth the true ring, as now. However she might appear to mock, those words would come back to her, and compel her attention, until their signification would some day become plain to her.

"I think now I shall bid you good-bye," he said: "I will see Gerty first, and tell her the carriage will wait. I hope you are not offended, though?"

"No, don't go, Davy; I'll be good and won't tease any more. Don't you think you'd be able to dance the Virginia reel, though? I always have it at the very end, you know; it is so jolly."

"I can try—if you insist," he answered, wishing himself away.

"You are a bear, Davy!" she pouted.

"I believe I am, Rose-Marie. I'm only fit for camp life."

"I shall take you in hand, then. But it is so evident that you hate dancing, I'll let you off on one condition, entirely. It is that you and Gerty stay after the others go away."

"I shall be most happy to do so; Gerty will

too, I'm sure," said Captain Warner, in his usual pleasant tones, all the clouds gone from his eyes and countenance.

"Very well, that's settled. I will sing for you, besides giving you a cup of tea. But come and be introduced to those pretty belles over there, who have been signalling to me, for the last ten minutes, to bring you over; then I shall have to go about among my friends to see how they are enjoying themselves, and if they have been attended to in the supper-room, then I shall—waltz." She had been moving across the spacious room with him, as she was saying this, towards the young ladies who smilingly waited their approach; she introduced him in her own charming style, said a few pleasant words, and left them to see after her other guests.

Captain Warner wondered what on earth he should find to say to two fashionable young ladies, who looked so perfectly versed in the ways of the world, and who, doubtless, had all the small talk of society at their command; and what on earth would they find to say to him? But it was not many minutes before he was quite at his ease; they did most of the talking, and their style of conversation did not require much mental effort on his part to keep it up. Other people joined the group; he was introduced, and in the general chat that ensued, he found, to his surprise, that he was really having a pleasant time. Meantime Gerty had met friends and en-

joyed herself; and she had danced the *Lancers* with Mr. Eaton, and between the round dances had promenaded and chatted with one and another, until the close of the entertainment, thinking it was the most agreeable evening she had spent in a long time. At length every one had gone, except the Warners, and when the hall-door closed finally, Rose-Marie, taking them by the hand, led them into her *boudoir*, where a bright fire sparkled on the hearth, and where luxurious *fauteuils*, and deep, satin-cushioned sofas offered every incentive to lounge, or think, or dream waking dreams, at one's ease. Growing and blooming plants filled the bay-window, diffusing faint and delicate odors, and several fine paintings adorned the walls; there stood a harp, and here an open piano with keys of mother-of-pearl, in keeping with the other elegant appliances of the apartment. There were portfolios of water-colored engravings, rare and quaint groups of bric-à-brac, and other attractive objects about the room, sufficient to interest any mind not disposed to *ennui*, and lit up by the wood fire and wax candles, as a whole, the effect was very charming.

"Just make yourselves at home, please, while I run and order a regular tea; one's appetite fails in a supper-room, when the scramble begins, and the fumes of everything get mixed," laughed Rose-Marie, as she flitted out.

"Her dainty appetite may be affected by such

things," said Captain Warner, laughing; "as for others—tell me, Gerty, do girls always eat at these places as they did to-night, and is it usual for them to take punch and champagne so freely? By George! I don't see how their heads could stand it."

"Don't be ill-natured, Davy!" answered Gerty; "why shouldn't girls eat when they're hungry? You must remember they had been dancing a great deal, and it was just about their dinner hour; I like to see people with good, honest appetites."

"But about the wine and punch, Gerty"—persisted her brother. But Rose-Marie came in just then, giving a quietus to his investigating mind for the time being.

They enjoyed the piquant little feast that Rose-Marie called a "tea," and could not help laughing at the sketchy accounts she gave of some of her late guests; some of them inimitably absurd caricatures, others made so true to life by her mimicry, and quick, keen perception of character, that they were recognized immediately. This was one of her talents, but she had tact enough to keep it "folded in a napkin," out of sight, knowing that her popularity as a social favorite would suffer by an exhibition of it, even among her intimates; for it is true beyond question that while persons may forgive and forget a personal affront, they never pardon ridicule, which proves how deeply pride and vanity are grounded in our natures.

"When will my turn come?" asked Captain Warner.

"When I'm in the mood for it. Don't flatter yourself that you'll escape," she answered, with a little ripple of laughter, which was so musical and attractive that some of her friends declared it to be a pretty piece of affectation. "But, O, Gerty, you don't know how nice it is to have you and Davy here, just so! You'd be sorry for me if you knew how lonesome this old house feels after this sort of gayety; and when I come from the world outside, it is as dismal as a haunted castle. But come, I'm going to sing for Davy; I promised him I would, if you'd both stay. Did you know, they say I sing like Patti?" she said to him, as she sat down to the piano, her face towards them, and ran her fingers over the keys. "What shall I sing?"

"Your choice, first," answered the young officer.

"My taste is very simple. I love Scotch music, and I'm going to sing you a Scotch song." And after a few sweet, wild chords, her face dimpling with smiles, she sang, in the sweetest, clearest soprano voice he had ever listened to: "Down the burn, Davie," and, with a nod now and then, and a bright smile, as she glanced towards him, she sang on, until Captain Warner's head began to go round a little, and he wondered if the Lorelei's voice sounded so to the fishermen on the Rhine, when she was weav-

ing the spells that drew them nearer and nearer to their doom.

"What an arrant flirt she is, and so child-like and beautiful with it all! Davy, my boy, look out for yourself," thought he, even while acknowledging the power of her charms.

"Isn't that a beautiful song? I learned it for the sake of 'auld lang syne,' when I thought you were going to be killed," she said, laughing; "but listen to this—" Then she dashed off into "*La belle Hélène*," the piquant French music, the saucy French words, rendered so brilliant by her execution, and wonderful voice, that Captain Dave felt as if he had witnessed a splendid pyrotechnic display.

"I think, sometimes," she said, leaving the piano, "that I might go on the stage. Do you?"

"Yes, I think you'd be a great success."

"You do? Well! that, or a convent," she sighed, dropping her hands in her lap with a despondent air.

He burst out laughing. Gerty could not laugh, and wondered what Davy found so extremely funny. She saw her friend, whom she had loved dearly ever since they were little children, in a new phase of character which she could not altogether understand; she only knew that it did not seem real, and it was her firm conviction that she meant to flirt with Davy, and break his heart if she could.

"Should you ever go into a convent, Rose-Marie, you'll make a sensation that it will take some time for the pious inmates to recover from," he said. "But we must say good-night, and thanks for this delightful evening. I see, Gerty is thinking of mother."

"Yes; we always sit with her a while before she retires; she likes to hear the history of the day from us, and quite enjoys a description of any social pleasures we may have. I think she will be disappointed if we get back too late to tell her how beautiful your party has been."

"Take her these, with my dear love, won't you? She was always so good to me when I was a poor little motherless thing," said Rose-Marie, heaping some delicious grapes and flowers into a light filagree fruit-stand. "It is not heavy, and you have a carriage."

Captain Warner received it from her hands, touched to the heart by her kind thought of his mother. Then their wraps were brought in, and with many pleasant words, and promises on both sides to see each other very soon, the Warners went away, and Rose-Marie was left alone.

"Dave Warner has an awfully good conceit of himself," she mused, as she leaned back in a low *fauteuil*, with her feet crossed on the fender, her opals glistening and glowing in the now fitful firelight, and all the prettiness of silk and laces falling unheeded around her; "and he sets me at defiance; I feel it, and I mean to make him

feel my power—just a little; I won't go too far, though, he's such a fine fellow—and I love Gerty." She sighed, as she got up to ring for her maid, and order the lights to be extinguished. Then she went up-stairs, with slow steps, paused a little while to lean over Don's bed, kiss his round, rosy cheek, smooth back the tangled curls from his moist forehead, and tell the nurse to be sure and not let him get uncovered in the night; after which she entered her own room, which communicated with her baby brother's, and closing her door, took off her jewels and her costly dress, which she flung in a heap on a lounge, got into a soft woolen wrapper, and sat down to finish reading a French novel which had interested her greatly. It was far in the night when she turned the last page; then she yawned, stretched out her arms in utter weariness, and dropped on her knees to say a few prayers, but fell asleep, her head resting upon her arm. Awakened, by-and-by, by the uncomfortableness of her position, she finally got into bed about day-dawn, her old convent rosary wrapped round her wrist, with a vague sort of feeling that the prayers it numbered might avail for her, now that she was too tired and sleepy to say them herself.

CHAPTER VII.

PETER JONES.

ONE day Mr. Warner came home so much earlier than usual, that the servant who opened the door for him said: "I hope you haven't been took sick, sir?"

"No, indeed, Rachel! I never felt better in my life, thank God! Where's your young mistress?"

"She's just fixin' Missis' lunch, in the dinin'-room, sir."

"Tell her, when she gets through, that I want to speak to her; she'll find me in the sitting-room."

Rachel disappeared, and Mr. Warner, having taken off his overcoat, opened the door of the sitting-room, which, as usual, was bright and comfortable, and went in. He drew his favorite chair up to the fire, and, after seating himself, he drew a letter, with a foreign postmark on it, from his breast pocket, and was opening it, when Rachel put her head in at the door to say: "Miss Gerty will come just as quick as ever she can."

"Very well; tell her not to hurry. Where's my son? is he in?"

"No, sir: Mr. Ashton come for him, awhile ago, and took him off sleigh-ridin'."

"That will do. I do wonder what ill wind blew Max Ashton out of his den to go sleighing, to-day," he growled, after Rachel closed the door. Then he fixed his eye-glasses on his nose, and began to read the letter in his hand. He had read it twice before, in his office down town; it was from an old university friend, with whom he had studied and graduated at Göttingen, with whom he had corresponded at intervals ever since, neither of them writing frequently, but each always sure of the other's constancy. He wrote to ask his old friend, for the sake of that brotherly love between them, which had outlived absence and time, to give a father's welcome to his son, who had just taken his degree at Oxford, where he had been studying ever since he was sixteen, and who wished, in accordance with his own views entirely, to spend two years in the United States, for purposes to be explained in a longer letter which he would present. "Knowing you so well," the writer went on to say, "I confide him strictly to your guardianship and care; for, although he has arrived at the age of manhood, he has had none of a man's experience, and but slight knowledge of the world, having lived among books and devoted himself to study. I can answer for the purity of his principles and character, and I know he possesses in himself the elements of a noble manhood. Best, above all, my son is a Catholic who is true to his faith, untainted by the faithlessness

and infidelity of the times. His love of philosophic studies exposed him to dangers, which, by the grace of God, he has escaped, his mind, guided by the light of the true faith, having detected their fallacies, and seen through their subtleties. To give greater facility to our plan, I wish him to preserve a strict incognito, and live among you as an American, which can be easily managed, as he speaks English perfectly. His grandfather's Christian name, and my own, will form together an honest name for him, Peter and John; let him be simply Peter Jones, the latter being derived from John; our family name would be in his way, there are so many foreigners in Washington who might recognize it, and thereby frustrate his intentions."

"It seems to have a flavor of romance about it," thought Mr. Warner, looking into the fire; "but whatever the motive, I give assent, knowing the honor and integrity of the man. I hope I shall be able to keep their secret; but Peter Jones is certainly not a very taking name." Mr. Warner heard Gerty singing along the hall, and he had just time to refold his letter, and thrust it into his pocket, when she came in.

"Are you sure there's nothing the matter, father?" she said, as she leaned over and kissed him; "I was a little frightened when I heard you come in so early," she added, drawing a low chair beside him, and taking her seat; and then she folded her arms upon his knees, and waited.

"There's nothing the matter, daughter," he said, smoothing her fair hair; "that is, nothing unpleasant has happened. I only wanted to know at once, if we can make room for a visitor, a gentleman, who will probably remain with us some time."

"Who is he?" asked the young housekeeper, gravely.

"He is the son of an old and dear friend, daughter; he is coming to visit Washington, and doesn't know a soul here, not even ourselves, personally. Just imagine Dave in such a fix." This was the spirit that always ruled in conferences between father and daughter, on domestic matters.

"A young man would be awfully in the way. I'm afraid," said Gerty, in a musing tone; "he'd expect to be entertained, and if he should be one of those exquisites who think nothing good enough for them, it would be dreadful."

"You need not be at all uneasy; I take it, he's a simple, unpretending fellow in his habits," said Mr. Warner, laughing; "but let me know, daughter, if you can make room for him, as I'm in a hurry."

"Oh, yes, indeed, father! there's the blue room Uncle Max used to have, before he went abroad. Will that answer?"

"Admirably! just the very thing, away from the noise of the streets, and of the house—for I forgot to tell you, the young man is a great stu-

dent. He will be here to-morrow. I'll run up now and talk it over with your mother; Dave will help us to take good care of our strange visitor," said Mr. Warner, getting up from his chair.

"Yes, I forgot Davy, bless his heart! But what's your friend's name, father?"

"Peter Jones," replied Mr. Warner, his face towards the door; but if Gerty had seen her father's expression at the moment, she would have had a vague suspicion that he was holding something back about this young man, who, she was convinced, was coming there to be one of the daily trials of her life; but, happily, she saw neither the twinkle in his eyes, the flush that mounted to his face, nor his amused smile, as he pronounced the name of Peter Jones. Mr. Warner was a man of such genuine and transparent truthfulness of character, that even this harmless little deception gave him, if not a half-guilty, at least a very conscious feeling, which involuntarily showed itself.

"Peter Jones!" exclaimed Gerty, folding her hands, as she stood an instant looking into the fire; "I'm sure no one need be afraid of a person named Peter Jones; I expect he's one of those good-natured, simple youths, who are satisfied if they get plenty to eat, and are let alone. This name is very reassuring." Then she began to feel a little uneasy, lest having a strange young man in the family would annoy her mother; and

there was Uncle Max, who had such old-fashioned ideas of propriety! What would he think about it, knowing that her mother was confined to her room, and she with no one to matronize her? There was Davy, to be sure, but his leave would end in a few weeks; and as to her father, he was never at home, from breakfast to their late dinner hour, while his evenings were invariably spent in Mrs. Warner's sitting-room upstairs.

"But, pshaw! what the use of worrying myself? Worse things than this, which I thought at first I could neither manage nor live through, have come into my life; but I accepted my cross, and went with my cares to our Blessed Lady, asking her guidance and protection, and little by little, I scarcely know how, I worked along, sorrowful and dejected many times, it is true, but at the right moment my courage always revived. It is true I never had a Peter Jones to try my patience; but that reminds me that two facts are to be met—Peter Jones is coming, and his room is to be made ready for him." Gerty went to her window plants, bent her fair face down among the sweet, pale, hyacinths, inhaled a long breath of perfume, picked off a dead leaf here and there from her geraniums, and began to hum a new air she was learning, a "song without words," almost forgetting for an instant her novel perplexity; and when she did recollect it, and all she had to do to meet it, she turned away

from the flowers, whose sweet balms had soothed her ruffled temper, with a merry laugh, and hastened to summon Rachel, and superintend the arrangements for the expected guest. The "blue room" was a large, delightful apartment; the windows were hung with blue chintz, the old-fashioned furniture covered with the same, the carpet was also blue, covered with shady gray and white ferns, and there was an open fireplace with a pair of stately, old-fashioned brass andirons and a brass fender on the hearth, all shining like gold, thanks to Rachel's old-fashioned way of polishing them. The high-post mahogany bedstead was prettily draped, to correspond with the window hangings, all the handiwork of the young housekeeper, who had designed and hung them.

"Everything does very nicely, Rachel. Get out fresh linen for the bed, and a Marseilles spread, and those hem-stitched pillow-slips. I want you to send up wood and lay the fire all ready for kindling. I think, too, the brass-work on this old bureau looks dingy; you can polish it up; the thing is so ugly, it needs something to brighten it"—

"Deed, it do, Miss Gerty; but who's comin'?"

"A friend of father's."

"A gineral, Miss Gerty, from the war?"

"No, a Mr. Jones; make haste, Rachel, I'll wait until everything's in order."

Rachel went to attend to the orders she had re-

ceived, and Gerty looked round the room, and thought it had a bare, cold look; the prevailing color in it naturally produced that effect. Not even the colored Italian views, which "Uncle Max" had given her mother years ago, hanging against the walls, sufficed to give it a warmer tone. Then she remembered some great clusters of holly, all aglow with the scarlet berries, which her father had sent home from market that morning—the very thing she wanted! She ran down stairs, and soon returned with a small basket, full of shining green and glowing red, which she picked out daintily enough to save her fingers from the thorns, and filled the vases on the mantelpiece; the effect was charming, the red berries lit up everything. "And when the fire is burning brightly with its glow and warmth, I think Peter Jones will have a sort of home feeling as soon as he comes in," she thought. "But I wonder if he's a Catholic; I forgot to ask father. At any rate I'll bring up that handsome engraving of our Blessed Lady in Egypt, and hang it in the recess there by the window, right over the table, where he'll put his ink-stand and write his letters. The sun will shine upon it every morning, and if he's a Catholic it will make him feel more at home; if he is not, it will give him good thoughts, and inform him that he's in a Catholic family." The handsomely-framed picture, a beautiful "Repoza," of the holy family, was

forthwith hung as indicated, and with tender, devout thoughts, Gerty arranged some clusters of holly about it. Some other pretty adornments which this practical young housekeeper collected, and knew so well where and how to place, added greatly to the general effect. Rachel gave her approval by many exclamations of delight, her African nature easily moved and highly satisfied by rich colors and harmonious effects. You'll find no better critic in such matters than your genuine African, who never heard such a word as æsthetic.

At last everything was arranged, and Gerty lingered to glance round to assure herself that nothing had been forgotten. She felt quite satisfied, and hoped that the lovely "Repoza" would give Peter Jones good thoughts whenever his eye fell upon it. "But, oh dear! suppose after all," she said to herself, "he should turn out to be a nuisance." Then she checked herself, closed the door of the "blue room," and ran down to her mother singing, in sweet low tones, the melody that haunted her, the "song without words," until she got to her door, where she stopped a moment, almost dreading to go in, lest she should find her with a flushed, worried face, from the news of the morning. And she had an undefined hope that her mother would herself refer to it. To her surprise, however, Mrs. Warner received her with a placid smile, and there was no sign of vexation or worry on her pale, delicate face.

"Have you finished, darling? Come sit here and tell me all you've been doing. I've heard from your father that he expects a visitor, and I am very thankful we shall be able to show some return for the great kindness he received once from the family of this young man, when he was ill in their neighborhood, many years ago, and a stranger in a strange place."

"I did not hear anything of that, mother. How was it?"

"Your father and the father of Peter Jones were class-mates at some famous university, a long distance away—my memory is bad for names—and your father fell ill with a kind of low fever, of which he would probably have died, had not his friend, the father of the young man we expect, written immediately to his parents, who lived some miles off at their beautiful country place, to come, without loss of time, and take him back with them, where he could have pure air, and quiet, and be nursed back to health. They knew him, as he had been home with his friend, by invitation, twice for the holidays; and for their son's sake first, and afterwards for his own, they had been very kind, and treated him quite like one of themselves. Without counting danger or cost, they set out at once, and conveyed him by slow, easy stages, to the pure atmosphere of the high country, where their home was situated, and there they nursed and tended him, through a tedious

illness, as if he had been their own son. Did you ever hear of greater kindness, and to a stranger, too?"

"I declare, mother! you have thrown a perfect aureole around Peter Jones's head, which glorifies even his ugly name. Of course, we must be glad to have him, and spare no pains to make his visit agreeable. Gratitude demands that much. But I think we always have a sort of dread of a stranger being brought suddenly into such intimate relations—ignorant, as we are, of his temperament and habits, or whether he's agreeable or disagreeable, good, bad or indifferent. But I shall do my very best, mother, and hope to be agreeably disappointed in the result."

"You're a brave, dear girl!" said Mrs. Warner, drawing Gerty's head to her bosom, with a tender caress. She was rarely demonstrative in her affection, and the young girl was touched and encouraged, feeling that it was very sweet to be thus commended by the mother she so tenderly revered.

"Don't praise me, mother, until—well, until Peter Jones has been here a little while," said Gerty, lifting her face, bright with smiles, to Mrs. Warner's. "I may prove an ignominious failure, and have to run here and hide myself like a very coward, before it's all over. But you ought just to see how lovely Rachel and I have made Uncle Max's room look, with holly sprigs, and pictures, and a Rogers' group—'Writing

Home' you know—and two or three other trifles, on brackets and tables. I hope he'll like it."

"Of course he will—how can he help it? You make everything cosy and pretty, and it is, I assure you, a fine art to know how to do it. As to your failing, I have no fear of it, knowing, my child, the motive of your actions."

"Mother," said the fair girl, lifting her mother's long delicate hand and leaning her cheek upon it; "God has been very good in sparing you and Davy, and bringing father through his troubles; and I mean to show my thankfulness by being cheerful, and brave, and hopeful under all circumstances. I hope I have learned to trust Him in all things, in shadow as well as sunshine, to the very end. By and by, when you get well, and the war is over, and Davy is home again, I shall have nothing on earth left to wish for."

"Do you ever think, daughter, that something may come into your life one day, to give you much to wish and hope for that you do not dream of now?"

"Perhaps. But I always drive such thoughts away. I am content; I know what you mean, I think, mother; a lover, I suppose. If so, I pray to be saved from an experience which, if all I hear and read is true, is a very disturbing element in one's life—weal to a few, and woe to many. The happiness of my home-life is enough, and I have no thought of any other," she said,

talking on rather as if she were thinking aloud than addressing a listener. "My future is in the hands of our All-Father—why should I disturb myself with vain imaginations?"

Neither of them spoke for a few minutes; then Gerty, shaking off her thoughtful mood, in which her mother had caught glimpses of her inner life never revealed before, rose up, her face wearing its wonted cheerful expression, and said:

"If you are sure that you are well enough, dear mother, to spare me an hour or two, I want to go out. I have attended to everything, I believe."

"Certainly, my dear; I shall be delighted to have you go."

"I should too, if it were for a walk this cold bright day; but I promised Rose-Marie to make some calls with her on people who have invited me to their parties this winter. I like to visit my friends, but I detest making calls. Dave has promised to go with us; it makes me very proud to see him admired and made much of, especially by the older officers we meet out; but do you know, mother, that Rose-Marie is trying her best to get up a flirtation with him? I own I should feel uneasy, if he didn't laugh at it, and say some very plain things to her sometimes."

"Poor little girl!" said Mrs. Warner; "she means no harm, but she's sadly in need of a

friend who will neither flatter nor encourage her in her follies. I have no fears for Davy."

"I wonder she don't get angry with him sometimes, for he tells her exactly what he thinks; not that he's rude, or attempts to snub her—he's too well bred a gentleman to do that—but he talks to her just as he would to me under the same circumstances, and she goes on all the same. Now I must go, mother. Good-bye until dinner-time, for I have to array myself in my 'purple and fine linen,' and don't want to keep them waiting," said Gerty.

"Be sure and remember all the agreeable things you see and hear; you know I enjoy hearing of the outside world, and of how old friends look, and what they say, and what they wear," said Mrs. Warner, pleasantly. Gerty promised, and left her.

Captain Dave was in the carriage with Rose-Marie when it drew up at the door; he had returned in time from his sleigh-ride; and Uncle Max had left him at Mr. Hazelton's on his way down town. Gerty was in the hall, ready, when he let himself in with his night-key; he cast an approving glance over her simple, but elegant and becoming toilette, whispered, "Just as I like my sister to look," handed her into the carriage, sprang in himself, and they drove off laughing and chatting as only the young and light-hearted can do. Between the calls, Gerty told her brother of the expected visitor, and how glad

they all were that he was at home to help to make things pleasant for him.

"Is he young or old?" asked Rose-Marie.

"I really did not ask father, now I think of it, but fancy he's young, as something was said about his having left college not long ago."

"What's his name?"

"Peter Jones," answered Gerty, without comment, while a rosy flush suffused her face—why, unless she had so involuntarily resented the unfortunate name, she could not imagine.

"Peter Jones!" exclaimed Rose-Marie, with a look of horror; "how could a human being survive such a name? How can you endure the idea of living under the same roof with a being named Peter Jones? You shan't sacrifice Davy to such an ogre, Gerty; I won't have him kept tied down to entertain him; Uncle Max is the right one to take a youth with such an insufferable name in hand." Her voice trembled with indignation in every tone.

"I shall have to be sacrificed, notwithstanding," said Captain Dave, laughing, "but who is he, Gerty, and where does he come from?"

"His family are dear old friends of father's; his father and ours were students together at some college, I didn't ask where, and I suspect he's an Englishman, or perhaps an American; he's coming to-morrow. They were all very good to father once, when he was away from home, and nursed him through a long illness."

“His family!—oh then, he’s an old man nobody’ll mind,” said Rose-Marie, with a toss of her pretty head. “Here we are at Mr. Seward’s; only look, Gerty, at the number of foreigners who are going in! How perfectly delightful!”

CHAPTER VIII.

A GLIMPSE OF A FACE.

"THE train gets in at 2:30, and we'll be here in time for lunch, daughter," said Mr. Warner, the next morning, as he left the breakfast table.

"Yes, father; I'll have everything very nice and comfortable," said Gerty, bright and cheerful, as she followed him to the hall to help him put on his wraps—a little labor of love that she reserved for herself always, and which he would have missed, had she, for any cause, been obliged to omit it.

Mr. Warner had spoken to his son, the night before, of the expected visitor, and hoped that they would become friends. "I'll do my best, sir, to make him feel at home; but friendship, you know, does not always come at one's bidding. I have the most friendly disposition, however, towards him, for your sake, and I shall be on hand to welcome him."

"That's as much as I could honestly expect," said Mr. Warner, in his pleasant, even voice, as Gerty finished hooking his fur collar.

Peter Jones arrived with Mr. Warner at the appointed hour. He had on furs and a cloak; a railway rug hung over his arm, and he carried

an ungainly-looking leather bag in his hand, while his fur cap was pulled down over his forehead, almost concealing his eyes; and he was altogether, Gerty thought, as she saw him through the curtains when he left the carriage, as uncouth and awkward-looking a person as she had ever seen. Davy met them at the hall-door, was introduced by his father, and grasped the young man's hand, bidding him welcome in a few hearty words; he then led him in, and helped him to dispose of his superfluous wraps, and his bag. He took off his cap, and stood revealed, a tall, well-formed figure, with tawny hair, large, honest eyes, and a pleasant mouth, what could be seen of it under a thick, drooping moustache; but he was awkward and shy, yet it was evidently not the under-bred awkwardness of ignorance, but of seclusion from the conventional ways of the world.

"You are most kind," he said, in perfect English, bowing to Mr. Warner and Captain Dave; "my father told me I should find friends when I met you and your family, sir."

"Your father's son is welcome a thousand times to my house," said Mr. Warner; "come, let me introduce you to my daughter."

Gerty was waiting just inside the parlor-door to receive and welcome him, but she felt half amused, half sorry, when she saw his face crimson, and an expression come over it which very plainly meant that he'd like to get away, if possible.

"You need not be afraid," was the proud thought that rose in her mind when, the introduction having taken place, she bowed, smiled, and held out her hand, which he barely touched.

In the warmth and glow of the cosy parlor, where, from the hangings and pictures to the smallest adornments, everything showed the impress of an elegant, harmonious taste—albeit some of the things were old-fashioned, and nearly threadbare—the painful shyness that froze Peter Jones began to wear off under the influence of the genuinely friendly efforts that were made to set him at his ease, and impress upon him, without further words, an assurance of cordial welcome, and presently he was able to make more than monosyllabic responses to the conversation addressed to him. Gerty excused herself, and went out to see if lunch was served, thinking in her heart that Peter Jones was the most remarkable young man she had ever seen, and firmly convinced that his entirely un-American manners were due to his being educated in England; and her opinion, long since formed, that American boys should be educated in their own country, was now confirmed. Everything was ready, and Gerty stood in her place, at the head of the table, with the dignity of a young matron, when they came in.

"I would not show you to your room until you got some refreshments after your long journey, my boy," said Mr. Warner, leading the way.

‘Thanks; if you’ll be so good as to excuse my travelling coat,’ he replied.

‘Certainly; we have no formalities among ourselves, and I want you to try and be quite one of us. This is your chair.’

Mr. Warner always asked a blessing at his table, no matter who might be his guests, and when he was necessarily absent, Gerty performed the little office without embarrassment or confusion, as something so habitual in her daily life, as almost to seem a natural outgrowth of it; and now, as each one paused an instant, crossing himself, she involuntarily glanced towards Peter Jones in time to see him reverently make the Sign of the Cross when grace was said. ‘He’s a Catholic, then,’ she thought; ‘that is some satisfaction. He crossed himself as if he had been used to doing it all his life’—as, indeed, he had been, only Gerty did not know it—‘and it will make him easier to get on with.’

It was a nicely-prepared lunch, and the young hostess was glad to see that their guest did ample justice to the good things set before him; her usual simple, pleasant manner gradually returned, the first awkwardness of reserve wore off, and she presided with her own peculiar grace, a grace without affectation or self-consciousness, and by the time they left the table, she began to think that Peter Jones would not turn out the *bête noir* she had dreaded. She ran up to tell her mother now nicely everything had

passed off. Mr. Warner looked in upon them with a nod and a smile, told his wife how glad he was to see her up and wearing something of her old, bright look, promised to be home early, and then hurried away to his office, leaving the two young men together, to smoke and get acquainted.

"I am sorry my mother's health prevented her giving you welcome to-day with the rest of us, but she told me to offer her very kind greetings. She has been confined to her room for some months now, and my sister acts as the special Providence of the family in her place," explained Captain Warner; "to-morrow, after you get settled, she desires to have you come up, and be introduced to her."

"A thousand thanks. To be so kindly thought of by the mother of the house is all that was needed to make me feel entirely at home," said the young man, blowing off a great cloud of smoke, that concealed a moisture that had gathered in his eyes. "I'm afraid I shall be a great trouble to you; I expected, you know, to live at a hotel; but Mr. Warner would not hear of such an arrangement, and I—I feel deeply grateful, at being brought here into his own family, and treated like one of his children. It was embarrassing, you know."

"Naturally, as you knew nothing about us; now, all you've got to do, Jones, is to make yourself at home as soon as possible."

The door opened, and Rachel announced that "Mr. Jones' baggage was come."

"Perhaps you'd rather be in your room to receive it," said Captain Dave.

"If you please," replied Peter Jones, tossing the end of his cigar into the grate.

"Tell the men to bring the traps up, Rachel. Come, Jones, I'll show you your room," said Captain Dave; and he led the way upstairs to the pretty, cosy apartment that Gerty had prepared with so much kind thought and care. There was a bright fire on the hearth now, clusters of holly glowed in the vases on the mantel-piece, and sunshine lay upon the floor. Peter Jones cast a rapid glance around; nothing of the general effect escaped him, and his heart warmed with a still deeper sense of welcome.

"It reminds me of my home when I was a boy, before my mother died," he said, grasping Captain Dave's hand; "you are too kind."

"Don't make so much of it, old fellow; you don't know us yet," said Captain Dave, laughing and speaking cheerfully, to banish sad and grave thoughts, which the situation rather evoked from the mind of his guest. "Here they come, big box, little box, band—no, not bandbox—it looks like a mummy-case, Jones, but it's all right; then there's a portmanteau and a great bag—is that all?"

"That is right, except the mummy-case," said Peter Jones, laughing, and lifting the case up

very tenderly, while he turned it and examined the fastenings; "I have not here the mummy of an Egyptian infant, Warner, but my violin, my Straduarius, the companion of my life. It is quite safe," he added, depositing it on the bed with as much care as if it had been a sleeping child.

"Here," said Captain Dave, in accordance with instructions he had received from his sister that morning, and trying his best to remember them all, "here Jones, you see, is a door that opens into a small room, or rather a very large closet, where you can stow your trunks after you unpack, and you'll find room in this old wardrobe to go to housekeeping in, if you like, and this tall bureau, that I verily believe came out of the ark, will give you no end of drawers, and—and—let me see if I've forgotten anything—oh! behind this curtain are shelves for your books, and that table over there will serve you to write on. But let me suggest something: Let your traps alone until to-morrow, and take a walk."

"If you will excuse me, I had better go to work now. If I do not, I shall lose the best part of to-morrow," said Peter Jones, who had evidently a methodical mind.

"Just as you like; can I help you?"

"A thousand thanks—no!"

"Well, I'll go and take a little run; by the time you get through I shall be back, and you'll find me in the parlor. We dine at six."

"I shall be unhappy if you do not go on exactly as if I were not here," said Peter Jones, laying his large, shapely hand on Captain Dave's shoulder, while his honest gray eyes wore a questioning expression.

"I'm off, then," he answered, laughing, "I'll forget that you are in the world, until I see you again."

"That is right."

"St. George!" thought Captain Dave, as he went down stairs to get ready for his walk, "I hope he's not a prig! If he is, I'm afraid I shall hate him. What is he doing with that little limp in his phraseology? It doesn't sound American, or English either, for that matter. I suppose he was educated at some German or French university."

In crossing the park, he observed a group of three or four foreign *attachés*, belonging to the different legations, sauntering towards H street, where several card receptions were going on, which they evidently meant to attend. They seemed to be in high spirits, and were engaged in animated conversation, mixed with chaff, the latter directed towards one of their number, whom an intervening magnolia tree prevented his seeing. In fact, he felt not the slightest curiosity to do so, and would have given them no further attention, but his way lead transversely past them, towards the avenue entrance, and as he approached, he heard the words "*la jolie Rose*

Marie," followed by a laugh, after which they turned an angle to get into H street, and he caught a glimpse, but only a glimpse, of a face that brought back vividly to his recollection the beautiful one he had seen, dead as he thought, in the cellar of the old Spanish house of Dom Pedro del Alaya; and its double, no less beautiful, that he had noticed so particularly a few hours before, on the mail steamer just leaving New Orleans. "Which of them is it?" Captain Dave asked himself. Could it be an accidental resemblance? Had Léonce de Moret recovered, and come to visit the capital? He determined to follow the young men, that he might assure himself of the supposed identity, or have satisfactory proof that he was mistaken. Dave Warner was not given to running after "will o' the wisps" of the fancy, but here was something which might be a real clue to the mysterious adventure he had stumbled upon in New Orleans. He reached H street with rapid steps, hastening towards Senator Hall's, before whose house the street was blocked with carriages, and into whose door the gay world was thronging. He was just in time to see the party he followed disappear in the wide hall beyond the vestibule, which was filled by an elegant crowd, who were being ushered into the reception room by name, as rapidly as possible. Captain Warner and his sister had received cards; but as they had concluded not to go, and as he

was not dressed for such an occasion, there was nothing left for him to do but go away, and keep on to Mr. Ashton's office to talk over the affair with him. But when he got there, Uncle Max was engaged in a grave consultation with two of his legal brethren, and could not be interrupted, as he knew of old. Altogether, the young officer felt that his equanimity was hardly equal to the demands upon it. He was conscious of being baffled, and through and above all, he was aware of a burning indignation that Rose-Marie Hazelton's name should have been so flippantly and lightly uttered in a public place by strange men. He would have felt so about any woman he respected; but she, whom he had known all her life, and whose very thoughtlessness and defencelessness appealed to his friendship and the chivalry of his nature for protection, would only have been compromised by any Quixotic proceeding on his part, however much the impertinence deserved chastisement. He wondered if Eugène de St. Aignan, whom Rose-Marie talked so much nonsense about, and this young foreigner, whose face had just startled him by its marked resemblance to the two he had so strangely met in New Orleans, could be the same? Here was enough, in all conscience, for Captain Dave to think about. "I'll keep my eyes open, that's all. That girl has no brother, and might as well have no father; and I pray God if any harm threatens the foolish, warm-hearted little thing, that I may find it out

in time. She shall not suffer for a brother's care, at least while I'm here." The young officer was on his way home, and had just turned from 14th into H street, when he met the Hazelton carriage. Rose-Marie, on her way to some other entertainment, was in it, and by her side the stranger, whose dark, perfect face had so startled him an hour ago; she saw him, leaned forward, bright with smiles and exultation, and bowed as the carriage rolled past; he lifted his cap, and felt for an instant as if—to use an expressive sailor phrase—"the wind was taken out of his sails." Then it occurred to him that he was disturbing himself more than he had a right to do about the affairs of other people—meaning Rose-Marie—who would follow their own devices, whatever might be said or done. But he was determined that he would trace the clue he had found to the mysterious affair in New Orleans, come what might. He was now near the church; the doors were still open—he glanced in, and far away, through the dim shadows that wrapped the interior, he saw the star-like glow of the sanctuary lamp, directing the soul, like a true Pharos, to its only safe port on life's stormy shores. He obeyed the impulse it suggested, and went in to offer homage, and ask help of Him whose divine and real presence dwells in the tabernacle. Kneeling a little way in front of him, he saw Gerty, who very often found time to spend a half hour in the sacred place, to say

her chaplet, undisturbed by worldly distractions. Presently she arose to go, and having joined her at the door, they walked home together, enlivening the way by cheerful words, the outcome of hearts at peace.

The next evening the young people spent at home, always the dearest and happiest spot on earth to them. Captain Dave betrayed the presence of the "Straduarious" up stairs, and opened the piano; then, after a little talk about music, Peter Jones was found to have an enthusiastic love for it, and for Mendelssohn in particular; he confessed acquaintance with his compositions, and Gerty admitted that she had been practising for some days his "Songs Without Words." The violin was brought down with a good-natured desire to please, and with delicate, tender touches, the great, shy fellow drew forth strains from it, full of taste and feeling, that were executed with masterly skill. His countenance lit up with the glow of his passionate love for music, Peter Jones—his shyness forgotten, his awkwardness cast aside—stood revealed to his stranger friends quite another personality, almost handsome, and of noble presence, with a strange mingling in his countenance of all that was manly and good. Gerty played the "Songs Without Words" to his exquisite accompaniment, and made but one or two mistakes, which he adroitly covered by a quick variation. The evening passed delightfully, and Mr. Warner told his wife, when

he went up stairs, that he had never heard music that delighted him so perfectly, the violin being his favorite instrument, and it was his intention to ask the favor of his young friend to bring his "Straduarius" in and play for her the next day, which gave her great pleasure.

The two young men went up stairs together, and before saying a good-night Peter Jones said, with some embarrassment:

"Perhaps you can tell me how I may find my way to the nearest church in the morning."

"Do you prefer one of the earlier Masses?"

"Yes, I wish to make a thanksgiving Communion, for my safe arrival, you know."

"We will go together, then, as it is my regular Sunday for Communion. We shall find a good Father in the confessional, and get through in time for the second Mass. I'll come to your door, shall I?"

"If you please—I am such a sound sleeper. Won't you come in for a little while?"

"Not to-night. You have finished unpacking, I see, and everything is in such apple-pie order, that I think I should enjoy upsetting something," said Captain Dave, laughing.

"Do, then. How will you begin?"

"I'll defer it; I'm afraid I'm too tired to do justice to my topsy-turvey impulses to-night. But pleasant dreams to you," said the other, closing the door, and going away to his room, where he poked up his fire, and throwing him-

self in a camp chair, leaned back, glowering at the coals, watching the fantastic pictures they made, thinking of the face he had seen that day, and wondering, until he found himself in a labyrinth to which there seemed no outlet. Then, drowsy with the very weariness of it, the brave young fellow performed his devotions, and commending himself to the keeping of the most pure Virgin, his head scarcely touched his pillow before he was asleep.

CHAPTER IX.

AN INOPPORTUNE VISIT.

THE fashionable season was at its height. Every one of the least social pretension was engaged in the whirl of gayety, as if for dear life. Everything else was forgotten, or seemed to be; all friendly visiting was postponed until the church bells should toll on Ash-Wednesday, and the tarnished, draggled finery of the season be folded away. We are not a Catholic people, understand; but Mrs. Grundy ordains that it is good form for society to keep Lent, and society does it from sheer exhaustion. At first there is a brief lull; then begin the decorous, charitable amusements, and the gossip and scandal of the whirl just over drifts to the surface, and reputations get torn to tatters over the steaming tea-cups at the Lenten reunions. This is this world's way of observing Lent; very different from the old-fashioned way we know of.

The Warners had not accepted many invitations, and had seen very little of Rose-Marie, whose engagements swept her entirely out of sight. Captain Dave had called a few times, but she was not at home. He thought perhaps he might find her in if he went just *after* her recep-

tion closed, on Friday, her regular "at home" day. It was 8 o'clock when he rung the bell, and he knew that the people who had thronged the rooms must have all gone an hour ago. He inquired if Miss Hazelton was in.

"Yes, sir," replied the servant, who had known him ever since he was a boy, and understood the intimate relations that had always existed between the two families; "she is in her *boodore*, sir; walk right in, if you please."

And Captain Dave marched in, accordingly, in time to see Rose-Marie standing near her harp, from which she had apparently just risen, while bending over her hand, which was raised to his lips, was the tall, graceful figure he had once seen wounded to death, or the *döppelgänger* he had met on the landing at New Orleans. But neither of them had seen him. The first had not recovered his consciousness up to the time of his leaving New Orleans; the other had not once turned his eyes toward him, although they had stood at no great distance apart on the landing, where he waited for a load of baggage and mail bags to get over the gangway of the steamer, before he stepped on board. It was too late now for the young officer to withdraw, having entered the *boudoir*; nor could he help the stern, penetrating look that came into his eyes as they fell upon the man. Rose-Marie flushed crimson when she saw him.

"I was invited in; I had a message for you, or

I should have turned away when I saw that the rest of the world had gone," he said, cap in hand, in his clear, firm tones.

"I am glad to be remembered. It is an age since I have seen any of you. Captain Warner, Monsieur de St. Aignan," said Rose-Marie, recovering from her momentary embarrassment. Captain Warner bowed, and so did the foreigner, with easy grace.

"Since you are glad to see me, Miss Hazelton, I will take a chair, if you'll allow me," said Captain Dave, whose old wound was aching, and who would have prolonged his visit now, even had his leg been perfectly sound.

"Do so; take the easiest one you can find, and let me give you this cushion to rest your foot on," said Rose-Marie, taking one from the sofa, while her eyes sparkled, and there was a little ring in her voice, both of which he knew as the signs of years ago. Whenever she could do nothing else to tease him, she affected to think he was very lame.

"No, thanks," he said, declining the cushion; "you are very kind. If it's not being too troublesome, will you let Don be sent for?"

There was a scintillating spark in the sleepy brown eyes of Monsieur de St. Aignan, as he watched Captain Dave's easy, at-home manner.

Yes, indeed; he's pining to come down. He's been in punishment all day for throwing some of the finest laces I had in the world into the fire—poor little fellow!"

"I suppose you rewarded him with kisses and *bon-bons*?"

"I believe I did; not just at first, you know—it was only when he began to sob as if his heart would break. What else could I do?" she asked, with a little laugh, as she stepped out of the *boudoir* to send for Don.

"Pardon me, but your face is so familiar, Monsieur de St. Aignan, as to puzzle an indefinite memory. Did we meet in New Orleans?" asked Captain Dave.

"I imagine not. I have been only a month in the country, and have not been farther south than this," he replied, with perfect *sang froid*.

"Allow me to compliment you on your perfect command of English."

"It was a whim of my father's to have me taught the language thoroughly. He had a warm admiration for your great republic, and, not knowing what tricks fate might play France in the future, he thought it was a good preparation, should I be obliged to find shelter here, which he desired me to do, if events urged it. It is a fine country—a fine Government, if it can only maintain itself."

"No fear of that, sir," answered Captain Dave, while an undercurrent of dual thought suggested: "There cannot be three faces so exactly alike in the world—it is impossible!"

Just then Rose-Marie, her cheeks still wearing a carnation tint, came in, leading Don, dressed

in his Highland suit, by the hand; a sweet, audacious, beautiful little outlaw, whose large blue eyes looked fearlessly out on the world, who was ripe for mischief at any moment, and as destructive as a wild kitten. His golden-brown hair was cut straight across his forehead, and hung in loose waves and curls over his temples and shoulders. He shook hands with both gentlemen, at his sister's bidding, then climbed to Captain Dave's knee, where he settled himself.

"I hope my little friend is quite well to-day," said Monsieur de St. Aignan, his white, even teeth showing under his dark moustache.

"I don't like 'oo," answered Don, glowering at him.

"Don, that is rude. Thank Monsieur de St. Aignan, and tell him you are very well," said Rose-Marie.

"Won't. Him maked 'oo send me 'way two times," said the *enfant terrible*.

"Don, would you like to take a ride with me to-morrow? I am going across the river to the forts, where you'll hear the drums, and see the soldiers marching;" said Captain Dave, to give Rose-Marie time to recover from her embarrassment—for she had not only crimsoned to the temples, but was for the moment bereft of the power of turning it off with one of her usual gay sallies. And he was wicked enough to bless Don in his heart. By what magnetism her foreign friend was warned that the man before

him was in some way, and for some inexplicable reason, averse to him, it is impossible to explain; we only know that he felt it tingling through every nerve, and that such instances are of common occurrence in daily life, in persons of sensitive organization. He had never seen Captain Warner before, nor could he imagine that the Captain had ever seen him. Surely his random question about New Orleans, then, could have meant nothing; he felt quite sure of that. But he was uncomfortable; not only uncomfortable, but secretly exasperated that his *tête-à-tête* with Rose-Marie had been interrupted. Presently he rose, said good evening to Captain Warner, and *au revoir* to Rose-Marie, then bowed himself gracefully out.

"Now for your message, Captain Warner," she said, curving her pretty lips and throwing back her head, with a little air that showed her to be in not the sweetest of moods.

"Oh, true! I had forgotten it in the surprise of meeting your friend so unexpectedly."

"And at seeing him kiss my hand, I suppose! Kissing hands mean just nothing at all with foreigners; it is one of their graceful ways, you know," she hastened to say, to show how little she cared.

"It is a foreign custom, I'm aware. He's a wonderfully handsome fellow."

"How generous of you to admit it! He is not only handsome, but he has travelled everywhere;

and he has talents and cultivation too, and polished manners, which it would be well for Americans to imitate."

"Miss Hazelton, I grant all you say, except the last. For myself I detest imitations; I prefer what is true and genuine in every one's individuality."

"Like Don there, I suppose. You encouraged him in his rudeness to-night, you know you did," she exclaimed, while her eyes filled with indignant tears.

"How, pray?"

"By taking so much notice of him; you always do; you have spoilt him."

"Have I spoilt you, Don?" said Captain Dave, looking down into Don's blue eyes, which were raised to his with a questioning expression in them.

"No, 'tain't," answered Don, without the least respect for grammar, or relevancy to the subject in discussion—he only felt that his sister had said something that he ought to contradict.

"Good night, then, little friend. I'll come for you to-morrow, if you are good," he said, putting Don off his knee and smoothing down his crumpled velvet kilt. "I think I must be going. I remember our school-day quarrels, Miss Hazelton. They used to be like April storms, but people change as they grow up, and their resentments mean more. What am I to think?" He was standing before her, cap in hand, ready to go.

Rose-Marie was conscious that she deserved reproach; she was ill at ease, and already sorry for her petulance. She loved the Warners, and would not have quarrelled with them for the world; and she could but contrast the manly figure, and grave, noble face, standing before her, with the one which had just left her presence. This one she knew and trusted; the other, although infatuated with, she had many secret misgivings about. As frank as she was impulsive, she held out her hand, saying: "Let's make up, Davy," and looked so exactly as she used to in their old, childish disputes, that he could not resist her, but burst out laughing, and grasped her hand.

"Come here, Donald darling, you shall not be sent up-stairs again," she said, dropping into a low Turkish chair, and folding the boy closer to her, showering kisses on his head and face.

"Two children," thought Captain Dave, as he witnessed the little scene, as brief as it was spontaneous; "both alike needing care and guidance." And in his true, brave heart, he breathed a prayer, asking the powerful protection of the Virgin Immaculate for these two helpless beings, who were surrounded on every side by snares and temptations, which their undisciplined natures would find it hard to resist without it.

"I'm afraid I shall forget Gerty's message, after all," he said, resuming his seat; "she sends

love, and wants you to come and spend your first disengaged evening with her; she has a great treat in store for you."

"Dear Gerty! I have no end of engagements, but I'm getting very tired of seeing the same faces everywhere, and doing the same thing, and saying the same words over, and over, and over again; even flirting grows wearisome at times. Do tell me, Davy, what spell has Gerty in reserve for me?—Peter Jones?" she asked, laughing in her old merry way.

"Some very fine music, I believe," he answered; "as to Peter Jones, I want to tell you that he's a splendid fellow."

"He's not ill-looking," she said, slowly, "I've seen him a few times in church. He must be awfully slow to get on with, he seems to be so pious."

"He's a good Catholic, but I don't see why that should make him slow. It surely does not detract from the qualities that inspire respect and affection. He's a cheerful, warm-hearted fellow, a thorough gentleman in the best sense of the word. Father and Uncle Max think highly of his intellectual powers. He's quite at home with us, and my mother, whom he goes to see every day, is devoted to him."

"He's almost too perfect, Davy, for this world," said Rose-Marie, throwing up her eyes.

"Probably that's why he seeks his happiness elsewhere. He's a shy fellow with strangers,

though, and does not show to advantage when thrown among them."

"And Gerty! how does she get on with him?" she asked, with a mischievous smile.

"Oh! very well; she has grown quite accustomed to him, and don't mind him in the least. I heard her scolding him this morning for throwing his coat and hat on the hall chairs, instead of hanging them on the rack."

"How refreshing! But his name!—how can you stand such a name? It makes my flesh creep."

"We have grown to like his name because it is his. It fits him, somehow," said Captain Dave; "but, indeed, I must be off; what shall I tell Gerty?"

"Tell her, with my very best love, that I'll come the first evening I can get off. This would have been a good opportunity, if I had thought of it. I rarely go out after my own reception, I feel so awfully tired. This day week, then, come for me, will you?"

"Yes, with pleasure."

"And you are quite sure you have forgiven me?" she asked, with a winsome smile.

"Yes, indeed; and, as a friend, Rose-Marie, I am at your service always. Remember it, and take my hand upon it as a pledge, German fashion."

"Oh, Davy, if I only had a grown-up brother like you! But I'll remember," she said, laying

her white, tender hand in his broad palm, "and if I ever want help, I shall let you know."

"That is right. Don has gone to sleep, I see, so good-bye; I'll come by for him to-morrow."

When Captain Dave got home, he found Mr. Ashton and Gerty in the hall, he pulling on his overcoat, she standing with his fur collar in her hand, ready to clasp it when he should be ready. Leaning against the door-frame of the sitting-room, where the three had been spending a pleasant evening together, was Peter Jones, his grave honest eyes watching Gerty's movements with an introverted sort of expression in them, as if he were questioning his inner life, and seeking to unravel thoughts almost incomprehensible to him. The girl's lovely daily life, with its religion of duty, the fruit of her earnest faith and unostentatious piety, her cheerful spirit and the simple charm of her manner, had won Peter Jones's admiration. Under her influence—unsuspected by her—his life here among strangers had been more like the home feeling he had always pined for, yet never known, and so filled with content, that he dared not question himself, lest it should all fade away from him, as most of his dreams did. His life had been a lonely one, without the tender ties of mother or sister to brighten it. Separated a great deal from his father, whom he loved and honored—and who was most worthy of a son's devotion—

by the high public duties which claimed his time, and living only in universities, where he found no companionship that was congenial, and which a nature like his requires, he had grown to manhood in a solitary existence; happily preserved by his holy Faith from those dangers which make shipwreck of so many young lives, he patiently awaited the developments of the future. The Warners, and his daily association with them, had warmed him into life, and brought out the unfolding blossoms of a true and tender nature; he had found home, almost a mother's love, whole-hearted friends in Mr. Warner, his son, and Uncle Max, and in Gerty—what? He could not define it. Was it friend? Was it sister? He could not tell, nor did he mean to torture himself by a mental vivisection to find out; whatever it might be, even if it were an illusion, it added a new charm to his life, and he was satisfied.

By this time, Uncle Max has shaken hands with Captain Dave, and is ready to say "good-bye," in the same breath, with his, "how dy'e do?" The hall door was opened, and as he walked out, to his surprise, his nephew accompanied him.

"I am going to walk a little stretch with Uncle Max, Gerty," he said, nodding to his sister, as he ran down the steps.

"Such balmy weather for a promenade," cried Gerty after him, her merry laugh ringing out

like music on the clear, ice-cold air. Then the door was closed, and the two gentlemen walked on.

"What in the mischief brought you out again, Dave?—do you think I'm getting too old to take care of myself?" asked Mr. Ashton.

"I wanted to speak to you, Uncle Max. As sure as we both live, I saw that fellow again to-night—the one I saw on the landing at New Orleans, or the one I found wounded in the cellar of the old Spanish house; it is one or the other of them. I told you of the glimpse I had of his face in the park the other day, and how it had startled me; but I called at Mr. Hazelton's to-night, and found him *tête-à-tête* with Rose-Marie, evidently playing the role of lover, while she—poor girl, with no one to guide or counsel her—is, I very much fear, infatuated with him. She introduced him to me as Monsieur de St. Aignan."

"But you see, Dave, that is quite another name. There was no mystery about the name of the young fellow you found half dead in the cellar; he was Léonce de Moret, son and heir of the Del Alaya estate."

"That is true, Uncle Max, but this Léonce *had a brother*, who, the old factor down there said, was the image of him, although they were not sons of the same mother; the two were at the old house together, the negress Chapita said, the very day before she found her young master

lying dead, as she thought, in the cellar* where she had gone to look for her cat. No one had seen either of them except herself, and there was no proof, except her word, that he had been there. But *it was he I saw on the landing*; I kept my eye on him until he got on board the mail steamer, just as she started, thinking he was the handsomest fellow I had ever seen. Then, on my way back to my quarters, I found the other one, and was confounded by the strange resemblance between them. Uncle Max, I am convinced that this St. Aignan is the man I saw on the landing, and that it was he who nearly murdered his brother."

"Be very careful, Dave; you may be deceived by a remarkable coincidence. There have been many instances of mistaken identity recorded; some of them have led to the ignominious death of perfectly innocent persons. You must be very cautious, my boy; but it is a little singular that this very afternoon two of my old friends, *habitués* of society, who came in to see me, were talking about this fellow, St. Aignan," said Uncle Max, looking around and speaking low. "It is reported, they said, that there's an affair of the heart between himself and that silly child, and at the same time there's a whisper of his being an adventurer. The foreigners of the

*A cellar *above* ground, not below it, the latter being impossible in New Orleans, where the water is so near the surface as to forbid all excavations.

various legations eat his dinners, drink his wines, use his horses, and win his money, which he is very lavish with, but none of them vouch for him; there's an impression that he's not what he seems to be. Somebody's found out that his letters of credit are good; and so far his conduct has been strictly honorable—no one has been able to find a flaw in him. It is astonishing Hazelton does not look after his daughter; it is a difficult thing for even an old friend to go to a man under such circumstances, and tell him he's neglecting a sacred duty, and that his daughter's name is being buzzed around in connection with that of a fellow who is suspected of being a scamp; for what tangible proof is there, after all, that he *is* a scamp? I must sleep on it, Davy; it has really made me unhappy. Good night!" and Uncle Max shook hands and turned the corner into his own street. Captain Warner went homewards. "I don't believe she loves him," he thought; "her vanity is flattered by his admiration and preference; there's a romance and glamour about the affair that dazzles her. Very well! I can only keep my eyes open. How I wish that she and Gerty had not drifted apart, for she needs a friend now, if she never lid before."

CHAPTER X.

ZORAYA.

SOCIETY people who occasionally caught a glimpse of her superb figure on her way to church; others who saw, now and then, the strange, chiseled beauty of her face when she was present at Mass, and so absorbed in her devotions as not to notice the falling aside of the veil which usually concealed it; some others who met her in her solitary drives, wondered why Madame Zoraya de St. Aignan secluded herself so entirely from the world which was ready, if she would only make a sign, to do her homage. But she had declined all approaches, all visits, and sent polite regrets to the invitations that poured in upon her—and the world resented it. With her wealth, and mistress of an elegant establishment, it said that she owed it to her son, and to society, to throw open her doors, and do as other people did. No one could in the least understand why a woman so beautiful, graceful, and of the most refined presence—who had travelled everywhere, and seen everything, and who was reported to be accomplished and cultured, in the highest degree—should choose to live like a nun. She had not yet reached

middle age, she was not an invalid, and she was not wearing widow's weeds. These were the only facts, except that she was the mother of the most attractive young man in society, and very rich, that could be ascertained. Then whispers and surmises began to float on the air. The least malicious pronounced her a devotee; others suggested that there were mysterious passages in her life, which she probably wished to keep folded away out of sight; and some said that she was melancholy mad. But good or bad, their opinions did not affect her; she would have smiled bitterly, had she heard them, and gone on living her solitary life unmoved. She gave generous alms whenever cases of distress were made known to her, through the papers or otherwise, but gave secretly; and no one ever knew who sent the large donations frequently received by the Sanitary Commission, for the use of the sick and disabled soldiers.

The good clergyman who sometimes visited her only knew her as a penitent soul, whose life had been stricken by griefs that she did not explain, griefs inflicted by the sins of others in the far past. He did not know of the long, bitter struggle, by which, through faith and penitence, she had won the power of a still, patient endurance, which was not altogether submission, nor yet the resignation most acceptable to Heaven, because the fires of resentment were not yet quenched in her heart, the burning sense of

wrong not yet forgiven. It was her nature, more than her will, that would not let her know peace.

Let us go to the house of this mysterious woman. It is past midnight, and we will find her alone. The fire burns low in the grate, under a heap of dead coals that look like *scoria* from a volcano, and white ashes, that tremble and flutter in the drafts of the chimney. A wax taper, floating in oil, burns with star-like radiance before a large painting of Mary of Egypt, and illuminates but a narrow circle, leaving the rest of the rich apartment in shadow. It is not too dark to see that the hangings over the windows are of crimson velvet, with arabesque borders of gold, and that under them are curtains of embroidered lace. Some of the luxurious chairs are covered with gold-colored satin, some with crimson; a table of malachite, bearing a costly vase, from which droop flowers of tropical tints, stands just where the dull red glow of the fire gleams upon its green, polished surface, and there is a large mirror, reflecting the *chiar-oscuro*, so full of shadows, and dull golden tints. On a low-cushioned lounge, rolled back from the fireplace, Madame Zoraya de St. Aignan reposes, and one might think her asleep, so motionless is she; on'y her large, soft, lustrous eyes, are open, dreamily gazing at the shadows, and lips are moving in silent whispers, as one by one the ruby beads of her chaplet drop through her fin-

gers. It appears inconsistent that one, whose life has been embittered by a nameless sorrow, should find heart for all this splendor, this glory of gold and crimson and precious things, these costly fabrics, this radiant glitter. They give her no happiness, but her nature craves them; they seem to be a part of herself, without which there would be a strange, cold emptiness in her life; and she surrounds herself with whatever her taste craves of the beautiful. They afford her a kind of companionship, which is mute and without reproach, something better than the hollow mockery the world could give.

Wherever she had her abode, her rare beauty, her wealth, her utter seclusion, and persistent rejection of all social amenities, had excited wonder and provoked remark; but indifferent alike to adulation and neglect, she had for years made her home where she listed, sometimes in the south of Europe, for quite a time in Damascus, then in one of the picturesque villages of the Lebanon, from there to the Austrian Tyrol, then back at last to Sicily, where she had long ago purchased a house among the olive-groves, and distant from the beaten way of travel, where she was joined by her son, from whom she had been separated for many years. His father, whom she had not seen since the boy was a year old, and to whom she had given him in charge, had died suddenly in France, which would make it necessary, the

young man urged, to go to the United States. "Anywhere," she had said, "since he is dead."

"My brother will join me there, after he gets through with the notaries, and the law technicalities about our father's will: he's the heir, you know."

"Yes, I know. But you are generously provided for; and I—I already had enough of my own. I will go when you wish," she said, with a proud air.

When they arrived in New York, their banker advised them to go no farther south, if they would avoid the excitement and dangers of the war; and so they went up along the New England coast, and found a sequestered cottage near the ocean, which the owner, a Southern man, had directed his agent to rent. And while she rested here, her son, anxious to see something of actual warfare, told her one day that he should leave her for a short time, and showed her a letter just received from his half-brother, requesting him to meet him in New York on the arrival of the next French steamer. She made no objection, and he took his departure. Knowing as she did the affection that existed between her son and his step-brother, who had grown up to manhood together, feeling no difference in their father's care, and sharing alike his prosperous fortunes and the advantages they gave, she thought it only natural that they should have a mutual desire to re-

new their intimate fraternal relations after so long a separation, the first they had ever known. But she, his mother, had been separated from him ever since he was two years old—until after his father's death, who, with his almost last breath, commanded him to rejoin her. Was the emptiness and isolation of her life caused by the unsatisfied craving of her heart for her child? It would not have been strange, if—with only this one object to love—her maternal affection had become an absorbing passion. But so far from this being the case, the thought of him had always stung her, even when her heart, obedient to the instincts of nature, was moved with tender yearning towards him; and now that he had come, his presence pained her, and awakened a blended emotion of deep compassion and intense bitterness, which made his absence a relief. Any mother might have been justly proud of his manly beauty, his noble presence, his polished manners, his culture, his good taste; but they only awakened memories that would not lie buried, and so turned into bitterness the sacred current of maternal love. How she pitied him, how she wished she might love him as other mothers love their sons! But she could only pray for him, and by assiduous care and watchfulness make his life as happy as she might, and sacrifice her own to save him from the evil day she foresaw, and would perhaps have no power to avert.

He came back with the cold weather, and told Madame Zoraya that he wished very much to spend the winter in Washington; he did not feel very well, and preferred the pleasant climate and congenial society of the Capital to any other place. He was reserved as to his brother. They were together, he told her, but a short time, and then separated; he supposed he had gone back to Europe. He was at times moody and irritable, again riotously gay, by fits and starts. "It is strange," she thought, "they should have remained together so short a time, loving each other as they do. Perhaps they have quarrelled." But she asked no questions, and began to make preparations to go south.

"It is my duty," she said to herself, one day, when she was occupied in beautifying the home they had secured in Washington, "to do all that I can for his happiness. He shall never know the secret that would blight his life, unless it be forced from me to save his honor, and avert misery. There is but one sanctuary for such as he and I, but one safe refuge, where peace may be found. But, alas! my son's faith is wrecked by the infidel tendencies of the age, which surrounded him when abroad—he shows a mocking scorn of religion and its usages; he holds himself aloof from all that is sacred, and his books betray the studies which have moulded his principles. And yet I dread to question him. O, unhappy mother! how can I avert the heritage of woe which is his only birthright?"

"And now," he said, after all was finished, and a rich harmony of color and arrangement reigned throughout their dwelling, "you will show the world how to grace a house like this. You will go with me into society, that they may see what a beautiful mother I have. I am very proud of you, Madame; I see none to equal you." He smiled winningly, and kissed her cheek, as he pleaded.

"Impossible," she answered, coldly; "I shall live as heretofore. To have a mother and a home like this will give you a better footing in the world. Make what excuse you please for me. Keep horses, give dinners, do as other people do, within the bounds of reason; but remember always that the world and I are forever separated."

He raved. He swore. He called her fanatical, and said that only aberration of mind could excuse and account for her unreasonable conduct.

"Let that, then, be the excuse if you will;" she said to him, unmoved, while her heart was surging with pity and anguish. He left her presence in a frenzy of rage, learning then and there, how useless it would be to attempt to change a will like iron; a will strengthened by the highest principles of religion and honor.

Having presented certain letters, and joined a club to which his banker had introduced him, Eugène de St. Aignan was launched into Washington society, where he made many friends; for none could be more winning, none more lavish

and generous than he, while his education and manners, both showing the well-trained gentleman, made his social success certain. Then, pleased with himself, he made his peace with his mother, and plunged into the vortex of gayety, which, notwithstanding the war, was never more brilliant than now, never more maddening in its whirl. Madame Zoraya de St. Aignan saw but little of her son after this. Sometimes she drove out; daily she spent from one to two hours in a convent chapel, to which her good confessor had kindly obtained access for her. There she rested her weary heart, seeking by prayers and tears to calm its stormy reflections, its doubts, and its fears. She passed her evenings as we see her, half dreaming, half hoping that the time for the long, long rest she waited for, was in the near future. The Sacraments were the golden drops in her bitter cup that saved her from despair.

A quick step fell along the hall; she started from her recumbent posture, as the door opened, and her son entered. He glanced around, but not seeing her, hidden as she was by the shadows, he was turning away, when she bade him come in.

"I thought you had gone to bed, madame, my mother; it is so dark I did not see you," he said, lighting the lamp, which flooded the room with its light. Then he drew a low chair towards her, and sitting down by her side, lifted her hand to his lips, and kissed it. There was a

gentleness in his voice, and a nameless something in his manner, that arrested her attention, her mind being ever on the alert for a forecast of the evil she awaited.

"My beautiful mother," he said, looking from under the long, dark fringe of his eyelids, his eyes soft, lustrous, persuasive, like those she had never forgotten, "I have come to-night to tell you something which, as it concerns my happiness, I hope will meet with your sympathy and approval."

"Explain yourself," she said, commanding her voice, though agitated.

"Well, it is only this," he answered, laughing lightly: "I have gone the way of all flesh—I have fallen in love; I wish to bring you a daughter; in short, I intend to marry a lovely young lady, who has honored me with her preference. She is of good family and position."

"I saw you coming out of a house near Lafayette Square one day with a beautiful girl, as I drove past. Oh, yes, she was very beautiful, with golden hair and blue eyes," said Madame Zoraya, in a low tone scarcely above a whisper, while under her quilted satin robe her hand pressed heavily upon her heart. The crucial hour had come.

"Yes! yes!" he replied eagerly, while his eyes sparkled, "it was indeed she, my love, whose name suits her so well."

"Her name!" was the low response.

"Her name is Rose-Marie! Could Fra Angelica have chosen a more suitable one for one of his Angels! Her father is a distinguished lawyer, a Mr. Hazelton, and they live just there where you saw us that day. Ah! when I bring home to you a daughter, my beautiful queen-mother, you will be obliged to come out of your solitude, like the evening star from behind a cloud," he said, caressing her hand. Every word he said increased her pain. She must speak even if she died.

"Oh, miserable boy!" she cried, rising from the pillow, against which her head was resting, "such a thing is impossible! Honor forbids it. I forbid it. It cannot, must not be."

"Mother, you would have been queen of tragedy, had you not mistaken your vocation," he said, in tones of keen sarcasm. "For heaven's sake, drop for a little while the tragic *rôle*, and descend to the level of common mortals. Why should not I, a man of good family and education, with ample means, marry, if such be my will."

"Oh, my God, help me! The hour so long dreaded has come!" she exclaimed, clasping her temples which were throbbing wildly. "Oh! Eugène, I would have spared you, but now, now I dare not. My own life is a wreck; but through my silence no other trusting, innocent heart shall be broken. How gladly," she said, laying her hand upon his head, and smoothing his soft,

curling hair, while she gazed upon his face with a look of infinite, tender pity, "how gladly would I spare you, and be to you what other mothers are to their sons, when this turning point comes into their lives; but honor, conscience, nature, forbid."

"It will make no difference to me, whatever the chimera may be that has got hold of your disordered fancy. I love the girl I spoke of, and I mean to marry her, let who may dare say no. It is the most confounded nonsense I ever listened to!" he exclaimed.

"Listen to me, then. Will you listen to me patiently?" she said, growing very white.

"Yes, I will listen to what you have to say; but it will not in the least change my determination, be assured of that," he replied, his eyes flashing fire.

"Listen, then. Your father deceived me when I was a pure, innocent girl, by a false marriage. You were born, and my happiness was complete; I had a beautiful home some few miles away from New Orleans, where with my old grandmother and my child, and long, frequent visits from my husband, the days passed like a summer dream; it was only a dream, that happiness from which I was rudely and suddenly awakened. A bright, joyous year and some few months had gone swiftly by, when news was brought to me one day that my husband had been married to the lady to whom he had been betrothed ever since

his boyhood; that his marriage with me was a mock ceremony, no more binding than a thread of sand. I could not, at first, comprehend such baseness; but at last it became clear to me, and that for me a—quadroon—there was no redress. Do you understand? I had, up to that time, been kept in perfect ignorance of my own birth, and of my connection with an unfortunate race. I was sent away in my early childhood to a convent in Canada to be educated; there I was taught the purest lessons of religion and of virtue, and in the good nuns had daily examples of the Christian life. My associates were refined, innocent, devout. I did not dream of evil; and so I returned to my home, ignorant of the ban upon my life, a knowledge from which my grandmother sedulously guarded me, there in our secluded home, away from the world. How was I to know that the words of love, the promises that after a time were breathed into my willing ears, were false? I had never known falsehood or deceit; and I was married with the consent of my grandmother, who, like myself, was deceived by Gabriel de St. Aignan—it was his mother's maiden name he gave me, his real name being De Moret. I do not know how far my desperation would have driven me at first, for my very soul was darkened by the great wrong that had been done me and you; but a brain-fever ensued, which wrapped everything in oblivion, and was followed by a long and severe illness.

“During this period, the good old clergyman who had baptized me visited me daily, and tranquillized me in a degree by his counsels. I began to find in the Sacraments of our Faith a courage and support that saved me from despair, and in the Mother of Sorrows a consoler. When your father—his name until this night has never passed my lips, since I discovered the bitter wrong he had done—proposed, after the death of his wife, through my confessor, to take you, bring you up, educate you with his younger son, and acknowledge you before the world as his child, and without revealing the secret of your birth, to make no difference between you and your brother, I was advised to consent, and did so, thinking that I had no right to deprive you of such reparation as he could make. At the age of two years you were sent to him by a trusty agent. Later on, I received a letter from him, offering reparation by marriage, and declaring that I alone had ever possessed his affections. It is needless to say that I spurned his offer with the contempt it merited; for what amends could ever heal my broken faith in mankind, and my ruined life? I hated—I loathed the being capable of such baseness, though I had no thought of revenge; my loathing was like one of those natural and uncontrollable antipathies one feels towards an unclean, creeping reptile; I felt that even the sight of him would kill me. I have kept the name of St. Aignan—his mother’s—

which he gave me in the mock ceremony which united us—feeling that I had a right, before heaven at least, to do so, and I made it a condition of your going to him that you should also bear the name. He has provided generously for you; but nothing can undo the stain on your birth. You see how impossible it is for you to marry, unless you mate with one of your own despised race—honor, religion, and the law forbid it! for, perhaps, the worst remains for you to hear. We are slaves—yes, we! my grandmother and mother—who yet live—have never been freed, and the heirs of the old estate could put you and me into the slave-market to-morrow; they are living, and not so rich as they used to be. We must be careful, for the ‘fugitive slave law’ would leave us no place of shelter in this broad land, should they get on our track,”* she said, with a wild, frightened look in her eyes.

As Madame Zoraya de St. Aignan had proceeded to relate the story of wrong and shame, of which she was the innocent victim, and which her son now heard for the first time, his head had slowly dropped forward, and leaning his elbows on his knees, he had covered his face with his hands; but at her last words he sprang up, his face deadly white and drawn, a deep imprecation on his tongue. He walked up and

* A most interesting case of this sort is related in the life of Bishop England of South Carolina.

down the length of the room, once or twice, every evil passion of his nature roused to sudden fury, and all that was best in him swept down as by a lava flood. She did not speak; her heart was overwhelmed with an infinite pity, and the thought, "Oh, that I might have spared him!" Presently his strong power of self-control asserted itself, and he came back, resuming his seat near her, and said, in a low, concentrated tone: "I would have killed that man, had I known all this, instead of fawning upon him as I did. I loved the boy I grew up with—yes, I loved him; we were so alike that apart no one could tell one from the other, and we were both the image of his father. He bore his father's name—I, yours. Such an arrangement is not unusual in European families, hence it never struck me as peculiar in my case. But I wanted to know where *you* were, my mother, who, I had learned by accident, still lived. I asked him, and he told me that it was your desire to live apart from him; then, when he was dying, he directed me where to find you. I knew there was a mystery of some sort; he left me to think what I might of you, and having forbade me to renew the subject, it was my best policy to remain silent. But I loved Léonce! he gave up everything, he confided all to me; he shared everything with me, and was jealous and exacting only for me."

"Where is he?" she asked.

"I do not know," he replied, with a slight shudder; "I have heard nothing from him for a year. But listen, my mother! I have not your scruples. I have heard all, but I am human; I assert my freedom as a man, a gentleman, and I don't mean that my life shall be ruined by fears that may never be realized. Who knows our secret?—who need ever know it? I shall not alter my plans."

"Do you mean that you will persist in marrying the young lady you told me of?"

"That is exactly what I mean. I will marry her, and we shall live abroad."

"I forbid it! Cruel as it may appear, I forbid it!" said Madame Zoraya de St. Aignan, rising and standing pale and stern before him, and speaking with majestic authority: "not only do I forbid it, but, unless you yield, I will prevent it."

There was a fierce glitter in the young fellow's eyes; he raised his clenched hands, as if to give her a blow in her face, but his arm dropped to his side. "Madame," he said, in tones of calm, deep fury, "you—you have given me an accursed heritage; that I can forgive, but it will not be safe for you to interfere between me and my present plans. By destroying my happiness, you'll destroy my soul, if I have one; for I swear I will blow my brains out before your eyes, if you attempt it."

"Oh, my son! my son! how the bitterness of

your lot wrings my heart! Come! let us go away to some far-distant land, you and I, and live for one another, serving God by penitence and submission to our bitter cross. Oh, I will give you all a mother's love, I will anticipate your every want, tend you and avert from you every ill that I can, and perhaps, after a time, peace may be ours," she exclaimed, throwing her arms around him, and pressing her wet cheek to his.

"It is too late," he said, with a short, mocking laugh; "I have no material in me for such an Arcadian existence; my education has been neglected, madame. Had you not sent me away from you when I was an infant, I might at this moment be chanting nocturns under a cowl; but it is quite too late for me to unlearn my life. I am afraid the hot African blood that poisons my veins has given me passions like the wild beasts of the jungle. Good night, mother; may there be peace between us."

She heard him go out of the room and close the door; then all grew dark, she remembered nothing more. When the servants came in, in the morning, they found her lying on the floor in a raging fever and delirium. The strain had been greater than heart and brain could bear.

CHAPTER XI.

TANGLES IN THE WOOF.

ONE morning Gerty Warner, having settled her household duties for the day, went into the sitting-room, intending to look over a new book which Uncle Max had brought her the day before. It was "Joseph II.," a novel by Louisa Muhlbach, which he recommended as being of surpassing interest, and added that "the fact of its having been brought out in the South at a time when the scarcity of materials and the blockade together seemed to make an enterprise of the smallest literary pretensions impracticable, would probably give it greater value as one of the curious features of the times." Printed on rough wall-paper, and bound with the same material, the volumes were indeed quaint-looking, and afforded an instance—as "straws show which way the wind blows"—of the pluck of the South. There was something strangely listless in Gerty's air, as she rolled her father's chair to the fireside and dropped into it; she looked into the merry blaze of the wood fire, as if listening to its pleasant murmur, its crackling and snapping, which, she often said, reminded her of children laughing, when the

golden sparks went trooping up the black chimney like swarms of elfin fire-flies. She loved a wood fire, and declared that it had a language which she understood—that it was an idyl full of beautiful fancies, and altogether the most cheery, companionable thing in the world when one grew tired of commonplaces, and the monotony of daily life. But Gerty was giving no thought now to her pretty fancies, and remembering all at once what had brought her there, she opened her book and glanced over a portion of the opening chapter; then, as if her thoughts were truant to her purpose, it dropped into her lap, her fingers between its pages, while something that sounded like a sigh escaped her lips. Resting her elbow on the arm of the chair, her chin on her hand, the dreamy expression of a minute ago appeared again in her eyes. Gerty Warner was not one given to moods or idle reverie; she had no false sentimentality or misdirected romance about her. Was she tired of her responsibilities in her father's house—or what had happened? But her thoughts found voice: “I knew something disagreeable would come of it. I wish he had never come!” was what she said. Then, opening her book again, she determined to read off her vexation; and while she is doing this we will look after Peter Jones, whom we have lost sight of for some time past. He now spent much of his time, when in the house, in his own room, excusing himself from joining the

family circle in the evening on the score of his studies; and, except now and then when his "Straduarious" was heard at night, like a musical echo, so softly did he play—as if it were breathing the memories of a saddened soul—it remained silent in its case. No more musical evenings, no more impromptu concerts. The fact is, he was in love, as you may have imagined; but with his peculiarly nice sense of honor, he believed that this involuntary preference for Gerty Warner, to which he awoke one day, was somehow a breach of hospitality and confidence on his part towards his friendly entertainers, who had taken him, like a son and brother, into the bosom of their family. But, thrown every day into the society of this pure-minded, lovely girl, seeing her domestic virtues, her sweet filial affection, her unobtrusive piety, and delighting in her quick intelligence and culture, how was he to help himself? The growth of this sentiment for Gerty had been spontaneous; it had stolen into his heart, he all the while thinking that his affection was that of a brother for a sister; there was, then, nothing left for him to do but to withdraw himself from her society as much as he could compatibly with his position as a guest of the family, which he did in the spirit of the Spartan boy who had stolen a fox, and held it tight under his cloak, even when he felt its sharp teeth gnawing his flesh. Peter Jones had other reasons for not openly seeking

a return of his love; he was trammelled by considerations other than his not having means to marry on, which were imperative, and which he could not explain. Gerty had noticed the change in him, and in her heart felt hurt by it, for she had learned in their daily and intimate intercourse of the last few months, to appreciate the true, noble nature of the man, his practical, unpretentious devotion to the duties of his holy Faith, his mental superiority, his frankness, and gentle, yet manly ways—qualities which won her respect so fully that she had been once or twice surprised by the involuntary thought that “a woman’s happiness would surely be safe in his keeping.” With woman’s swift instinct in such matters, she soon read his secret, which he betrayed in a thousand ways without being at all conscious of the significance of his looks and words; but she thought—“If he thinks best, for whatever reason, not to speak out, I am quite willing, and my life—after the first ripple—will go on all the same. I have enough to engage head, heart, and hands, thank God! for many—I hope—long years to come.” Then Gerty would go her way, up and down the house, singing some sweet little ditty, and filling out her days as usual in unselfish thoughts and acts for others, and doing always whatever she could to relieve the poor hearts that came to her for assistance.

“Something must be the matter with Peter

Jones, Gerty;" said Mrs. Warner to her one day, no one else being present; "what do you suppose it can be? He has grown so quiet and grave, that I am quite worried over him. Do you think he is home-sick?"

"He may be, mother. If he is, there's no reason why he should not go home."

"But you forget he's to spend a year here, my child, and it has been only four months since he came. I am really very fond of him; he's been very kind to me; I hope he's not in trouble." Mrs. Warner did not notice the delicate glow that suffused Gerty's face as she answered:

"I hope not; I did not think of that. But you know, dear mother, we can't ask him questions; it would seem as if we were prying into his affairs. He will probably take you into his confidence some time, when you and he are sitting here all alone; he's very fond of you, and as one naturally goes to one's mother with one's trouble, he'll be sure to come to you with his, for he says you have been a mother to him."

This was the state of affairs in the Warner household up to the hour when Gerty took her seat in her father's chair in the cheerful, flower-decked sitting-room, to drive away care by reading Muhlbach's "Joseph II." Finding it impossible to do this, she dropped the book, saying: "I knew something disagreeable would come of it. I wish he had never come." Having re-

lieved her mind somewhat by giving vent to her feelings, she began to read, but found herself more intent on what ran between the lines than on the sense of the printed words before her eyes. Before long, she heard the hall door open; she turned her head to see who it might be, but only in time to hear the servant say: "She is in. Please walk in; I think Miss Gerty's in the sitting-room." In another moment the door was thrown open, and as quickly closed, and Rose-Marie Hazelton rushed in, and flung herself on her knees beside her, burying her face on her breast, where she wept and sobbed without saying a word. Gerty, unused to such scenes, was frightened; she could not rise, Rose-Marie held her in so close a clasp, or she would have sent some one up to her mother to ask if they might come to her room. That was her first thought, but as she could not get away to send her message, she put her arms around her friend, and begged her not to cry: "Was anything the matter with poor little Don?" she asked, for she imagined that he had fallen out of the window and broken his neck, or, possibly, had died in the night of croup.

"Oh, no! no!" she sobbed.

"But what is the matter, darling? Tell me, that I may know how to help you."

"No! no! no!"

"Well, then, get up, and sit in this nice, low chair, and let me get you some wine, or water,

or tea, or something. 'There, now tell me your trouble. You'll really break my heart, going on in this wild way. What is it, darling?'"

"I am mad, Gerty Warner," burst from the girl's beautiful lips; "so mad that I'd like to kill somebody." She did indeed look like a fury, with her swollen eyes, her tear-stained countenance distorted with rage.

"Oh, Rose-Marie! you don't mean anything so dreadful!" exclaimed Gerty, in whom the revulsion of feeling was so sudden that she laughed when she knew that she ought to cry. All those precious tears wasted, all that emotion and ferment of the vital forces, because the pretty, spoiled young lady was mad enough to kill somebody. It was absurd, as well as sad, and Gerty wished she had not laughed.

"Rose-Marie," she said gravely, "I must know what throws you into this state. I have the right of a friend to ask, since you have come to me. How can I help you if you don't explain things to me?"

"You can't help me, anyhow, not even if you knew. I came to you because I had no mother to fly to with my grief. There's nobody there but the servants. Who had I to go to, then, but you, Gerty?" she wailed, covering her face with her hands.

"Let me try to help you, poor little sister; you know I love you," said Gerty, standing at her side and drawing the girl's head to her breast. "Who has wounded you like this?"

"My father did. Oh, yes! he has left me alone all my life, to do just as I please ever since I can remember, and never meddled with me in the least until now—now, just when I was as happy as could be, he comes in to-day, an hour ago, and gives me such a furious settling down, you never heard the like, all about Eugène de St. Aignan; and he forbade me ever to see him again, and made me listen to a letter he had written and was going to send him, telling him that for the future his door was closed against him. Such an insulting letter! and all for nothing except some rubbishy reports that have been stirred up by the busybodies of Washington! But I don't care a snap; if I can't see him in my father's house, I can see him out of it. It is unreasonable! Oh, Gerty! Gerty! what shall I do?"

"Obey your father's commands. He has good reasons, you may be sure, for doing what he has. If he has been mistaken or heard false reports about your—the gentleman—it will all come right, depend upon it; so be patient and wait."

"I won't be patient, and I won't wait!" exclaimed the self-willed creature; "and I won't be preached to, Gerty Warner."

"Rose-Marie, answer me one question. When were you at confession?"

"It is none of your business! Oh, Gerty! Gerty! if you only knew how unhappy I am.

You'd pity me if you did!" she cried, bursting into a passionate fit of weeping.

"There is one who knows—our compassionate Mother of Help, who will pity and succor you better than I or any one else on earth can, if you'll only go to her; aye, she will guard you from threatened perils, seen and unseen, and guide you safely back to the feet of her divine Son," said Gerty, in grave, sweet tones.

"*How* can I think of such things when I'm so tossed and distracted, and so mad?"

"Now's the very time. How else can you hope for, or find comfort? Go right straight to Father Vincent, acknowledge your faults in the tribunal of penance, and our Blessed Lady will be your help and strength," said Gerty, folding Rose-Marie's hands in hers, and speaking with emotion.

"Gerty, you are very good, but you have never been placed as I am. Good-bye."

"Not until you promise me, on your honor, not to see your lover clandestinely, or against your father's wishes."

"Not clandestinely," she said, with a haughty toss of her head: "I know too well what is due myself for that; but against his wishes, I certainly shall; for after what has passed between my father and me, he will never give in—neither will I." Before Gerty could say another word, Rose-Marie was gone, leaving her shocked and dazed beyond expression.

"Here's work for Dave," she almost whispered; "I shall have to tell him, that he may be on the alert, in case her folly leads her too far. He can but try to avert danger from her, should it really come. If she goes on like this, who can foresee the end? My God! how I thank Thee for good parents! Poor Rose-Marie! Oh, Blessed Lady of Perpetual Help! be thou mother and defence to her misguided feet, and lead her back by thy love to the paths from which she has gone astray."

Gerty Warner covered her face with her hands, and relieved her full heart by having a good cry. "Oh!" she thought, "how insignificant my worries appear beside the dreadful danger that threatens that poor girl's untried, undisciplined soul!"

She heard her father's step in the hall, and waiting until he got by, she ran upstairs to bathe her eyes, then hurried back to give him lunch, and make everything as cheerful as she might, by talking of all the agreeable things she could think of. Dave and Peter Jones had gone on a long tramp among the defences across the river, and would not be home until late, which was a relief to Gerty.

Who of all his friends had been true enough to go to Mr. Hazelton and tell him that people were making too free with his daughter's name by circulating reports, making comments on her engagement to a foreigner whom she had never

seen until two months ago, and about whom public sentiment agreed there hung something of a mystery? Not one. It was a delicate matter to interfere in, they thought, so each one held his peace, wishing that another would do it—Max Ashton, for instance. It *was* a delicate mission to perform; but admitting the girl's danger, a friend should no more have hesitated to act than if he had seen her drowning, and leaped into the water to save her life at the risk of his own.

On the morning Rose-Marie had rushed so distractedly into Gerty Warner's presence, Mr. Hazelton had gone to his office, feeling an unusual degree of satisfaction and cheerfulness, having had a very complicated case, tedious and bristling with difficulties throughout, decided in favor of his clients the day before. He sat down to his table and began to turn over some letters his clerk had just brought in, when his attention was suddenly attracted by a woman's delicate handwriting on a fine French envelope, addressed to himself. He opened it and found only a few lines without signature—an anonymous letter—and with a contemptuous "Pshaw!" he was about dropping it into the waste-basket, when his attention was arrested by the words: "Your daughter's happiness." As his daughter's happiness was very dear to him, and as he had always thought he was best securing it by leaving her at liberty to do as she pleased, and supplying her generously with

spending-money, he wondered why any one should write to him anonymously in regard to her or her happiness, and instead of throwing the note away, he read it. "Be careful," it ran, "of your daughter's happiness, or it will ere long be ruined by a fatal marriage with one whose family origin places an insuperable bar between them. Be warned by one whose sole motive is to save her from wretchedness, and another from crime."

"What confounded nonsense is all this?" exclaimed Mr. Hazelton, springing up as if suddenly touched with a hot iron. "A marriage! Rose-Marie! I have heard no hint of such a thing. It is a mischievous lie; I don't believe it, and yet it forces itself upon me that there's more than appears under this. I trust in God my girl has not gone and got herself entangled in an affair that will make trouble. How am I to know? How can one meet an anonymous letter? How find out whether it is true or false? I must ask somebody questions and counsel—yes—Max Ashton is the best one to go to. He'll be sure to know if there are any rumors afloat about Rose-Marie's going to be married—pshaw!—it seems too absurd for belief; but I'll show Ashton this confounded note, and see what he thinks about it." And placing the note in his pocket, he put on his overcoat and hat, and hurried across the square towards Max Ashton's office, and, happily for his purpose, found him in, and not particularly engaged.

"I've come to see you, Ashton, about something that has just happened. I found an anonymous letter in my mail this morning; there it is," said Mr. Hazelton, handing it to him; "read it, will you, and tell me if you think it amounts to anything."

Max Ashton read the note, but did not immediately reply.

"Ashton, I see that you are embarrassed—you hesitate! Tell me, I demand it of you, tell me frankly, whether you have or have not heard any rumors of such a thing as that letter in your hand refers to;" said Mr. Hazelton, in a voice of suppressed anger and emotion.

Max Ashton *was* embarrassed; the situation was painful to him in the extreme; for if he said too little, now that he was asked to speak by the girl's father, he would fail in his duty towards a friend; and if he told him that his daughter's name was being passed from mouth to mouth with reports that left invidious impressions, because the slender thread of truth that ran through them made the lies that garnished them appear more probable, he did not know to what extremity Mr. Hazelton, who was a passionate man when roused, would go. He really found it difficult to speak.

"You have heard something, Ashton; tell me, I entreat you, what is it? I wish to know at once."

"One is always hearing rumors about beau-

tiful girls being engaged to be married to this or that one of her lovers, and Rose-Marie has not escaped," he answered.

"Engaged! to whom, do they say? Don't be afraid to tell me the truth, Ashton."

"I have heard that she is engaged to a Mr. Eugène de St. Aignan, who has been very devoted to her ever since the season opened, at which time, I understand, he first came to Washington. He's a fine-looking, handsome fellow, who has been much courted in society, but who he is, nobody exactly knows. No one can lay a finger on anything against him, but the doubt follows him like a shadow. 'There's probably no truth at all that things have gone so far as the note intimates, and it may be that it was penned by some jealous, envious girl, to make trouble.'"

"I don't think so. I'm going straight home to my daughter to question her. She never deceived me; and she has one of those brave, audacious natures, that would own up to the truth, if she was shot for it the next minute."

"Don't be too harsh with her, Hazelton. It is a case, remember, which for her sake will require very delicate management. Publicity must be avoided at all risks. Rose-Marie has only been thoughtless; I'm sure it's no worse than that, and much can be excused of one who has never known a mother's care," said Max Ashton.

"I'll hear what she has to say, Ashton, and if she admits there's anything serious in the report of her engagement to that fellow, I'll forbid her ever seeing him again, and inform him by letter that the doors of my house are closed against him. Then, if that don't put a stop to it, I'll shoot him!"

"Let me entreat you to be very prudent and careful, my friend: you know human nature is prone to contrariness, and may be driven by unwise treatment to desperate things."

"I'll see that my daughter doesn't disgrace herself by an improper marriage," he answered in a stern voice. He wrung Max Ashton's hand and went away, leaving the quiet bachelor in an agitated state of mind.

Rose-Marie was at home, and we have seen how stormy must have been the interview she had with her father, by the way it affected her when she went to pour out her griefs to Gertrude Warner. I will further explain, by way of untangling the threads of my woof, that the note Mr. Hazelton received was from Madame Zoraya de St. Aignan, who had recovered from her temporary delirium and fever, but continued feeble, and was tortured by unceasing anxiety about her son's intentions regarding his marriage with the beautiful girl he had named to her as his affianced wife; he had told her that his purpose was unchanged, and that the event would take place in a very short time. Again she

pleaded with him to desist while there was yet time, but he said with an oath there was no power that could prevent his carrying out his plans to the uttermost. He knew that she was too feeble to make any personal effort to thwart him, but he also knew that she could bring his purpose to naught just as effectually by writing; and he gave orders to the servants to bring any letters given them by Madame, his mother, to him, and he would mail them with his own. She felt, somehow, a sense of being under *espionage*, and was fully aware that her son was crafty enough to prevent, until it should be too late, a communication from herself reaching any one outside. But, knowing how much depended on her interference, and how disastrous the results that would follow if she did not bestir herself, she hit upon a plan by which she hoped, with heaven's help, to break off a marriage which would on one side be a crime, and on the other cause inevitable misery. She wrote a brief note to Mr. Hazleton, and knowing the letter-carrier's hour for passing morning and afternoon, she determined to watch her opportunity to drop it from her window to him. Two days passed; she saw the carrier come and go up and down his route, but her maid happened to be in her room each time; on the afternoon of the third day, however, the woman asked permission to visit her mother, who had been seized with some sudden illness, and she was alone.

There was a drizzling rain, and the day was dark and gloomy; but few persons were passing as she stood watching for the carrier, the letter in hand, ready to throw to him the moment he came near enough. She saw him turn the corner on the opposite side; he crossed over, stopped at one or two doors to deliver letters, and walked quickly towards her house. As she threw up her window it attracted his attention, and he looked up; she dropped her letter, he took it up, nodded his head to her, meaning that it should be mailed safely, and went his way, for there was nothing remarkable to his mind in a lady's tossing him a letter for the post from her window, in the probable absence of her servants. It was done, and Madame Zoraya, overcome with agitation by her effort and success, staggered to her bed and lay down white and trembling, whispering *Aves* out of her heart's fulness that what she had done might not be too late to avert the evil she dreaded.

Several days after this series of events, Gerty Warner was sitting alone in her own room, and not in the blithest of moods—don't be shocked, fastidious reader—darning socks, while her thoughts were quite as busy as her fingers. "I wish I could mend some things that go wrong, as easily as I do these holes," was the thought that had just passed through her mind, when Rachel came to the door.

"Miss Rose-Marie wants to see you, Miss

Gerty, and says can she come up here?" said Rachel.

"Oh yes, indeed; tell her to run right up."

The pretty, wilful creature, after the usual kiss and embrace were over, dropped into a low, sewing chair, and having inquired how "Mamma Warner"—as she had always called her—was, and "where Davy had been keeping himself this age past?" told Gerty that she had just run in to look at her, and could not stay five minutes, as she had an engagement with a friend. And her face grew so rosy red, and her countenance wore so exulting a look, while defiance sparkled in her eyes, as she spoke, that Gerty felt convinced this "friend" was none other than de St. Aignan. She asked her downright if it were so.

"And what if it should be? My father has forbidden me to receive him, and ordered him not to darken his doors again; but I made no promise, remember, that would prevent my seeing him elsewhere, and I mean to do it," she said, in defiant tones.

Then, with the tenderness and frankness of a true friend, Gerty again spoke, telling her the danger she ran by encouraging, in open opposition to her father's commands, a man whom no one seemed to know. She reminded her that she was a "Child of Mary," whose pure heart she would grieve by her disobedience, and whose sweet example she no longer regarded; she touched gently on the gossip that was going on

in society about the affair, and the more than possibility that the exaggerated reports that were rife might at last assail her fair name.

"What do the dear creatures say?" she said, with an angry laugh; "do they say that I am as mad as Cassandra, and as foolish as Lot's wife? That's out of a book. But what do I care? I found out long ago that my dolls were stuffed with saw-dust, so let them all say and do what they please, the tiger-cats! I don't mean to be robbed of my happiness to gratify them or anybody else."

Once more Gerty pleaded with and counselled her; fast flowing tears attesting her deep concern, and then there was another scene. Rose-Marie, although touched, and obliged by her own conscience to admit the truth of her friend's words, would promise nothing. Her father's conduct in the affair had been wholly unreasonable, she said, and she did not mean to submit to it. After saying much more after the same fashion, she hugged and kissed Gerty, told her she loved her dearly and didn't mind her scolding in the least, and happen what might, her friendship and Dave's were the two things she would prize and cling to to the happy or—maybe—bitter end.

"You shall never claim it in vain, Rose-Marie, but under the circumstances I cannot be your confidant in the affair. Do not tell me anything else about it, unless you yourself find that it is all wrong and I can help you out of the difficulty."

"Very well. That's a thing you can safely promise, for I think I'm all right. Good-bye." And she tripped away with a not too easy heart, to meet her friend.

When Gerty went to her mother's room to read to her, there was a look of trouble in her face which Mrs. Warner was quick to see. There was perfect friendship and confidence between mother and daughter; their love for each other was strong and deep, and a sacred thing, consecrating their daily intercourse. The first words she said were: "Gerty, my child, sit here by me, and tell me what is in your mind."

"Yes, mother, willingly. I am greatly troubled about Rose-Marie. I'm afraid she's getting herself into deep waters, and I can't see how I am to help her."

"Nor I, unless you talk plainly to her, not sparing her through false sentiment, and counsel her in a way best suited to her case."

"I have done so, mother, at the risk of her never speaking to me again; I told her all that was in my heart, and warned her. She was defiant and angry, then tried to laugh it off, and sobbed with her arms around my neck, like a child. But she really told me nothing—that is, not much—and I'm just as sure as can be that her lover will end by persuading her to run off with him or marry him clandestinely."

"Nonsense! where did you pick up such romantic ideas, Gerty? People in novels do such

things, but a well-brought-up young lady like Rose-Marie! Nonsense!"

"She has not been well brought up, more's the pity. She has been having her own way ever since she can remember. Now she resents her father's interference in her love affair, and is defiant of his control. I have met her walking with Mr. St. Aignan, and I know she sees him at houses they both visit, where his attentions are so conspicuous as to attract every one's attention."

"Does she love him, do you think?"

"I do not know. She told me once or twice that it was only a flirtation, and hoped I'd make no more fuss about it. She said, too, if her father had not forbidden her to receive the gentleman at home, things would not have gone so far as they have; but as their doors had been closed on him without the shadow of an excuse, she felt that she owed him some reparation for the insult. I asked her—indeed, mother, I did—when she had been to confession, but she would not tell me; then I begged her to go, and for poor little Don's sake to be prudent. She told me to keep my advice to myself, she would ask for it when it was needed, and ended by laughing at me, and saying I would grow to be a frumpy, meddlesome old maid, if I didn't take care. Now, mother, what can be done with such a being?" asked Gerty, with tears in her eyes.

"Not much I fear, except to pray to our Blessed Lady to shield her from evil. You must not give her up, but go to see her whenever you can, Gerty, never minding her petulant ways, and sharp, saucy speeches. She doesn't mean to be unkind, and behaves so, I am very sure, because she is ill at ease," said Mrs. Warner.

"And oh, mother, people are whispering such unkind things of her! If I could only help her, if I could just think of something before it is too late!" exclaimed Gerty.

"We can ask without ceasing the intercession of Our Lady of Perpetual Succor for her, and offer our Communions also, that she may be delivered out of this entanglement," Mrs. Warner answered in low, reverent tones. Her mother's sympathy somewhat lightened Gerty's heart, that had still its own secret battles to fight; but they were her own, and would pain only herself, until with God's help she conquered self, and could once more walk unshackled in the paths of duty.

The following week Captain Warner spoke of his intention of attending the closing ball of the season. He had to all appearance grown very gay in the last month, never missing an entertainment, and frequently attending two or three the same evening. Mr. Warner noticed this new departure, and said: "What in the world has got into Davy, lately? He is never satisfied nowadays unless he's at a ball or something. I thought he didn't much care for such things."

"It amuses him, I suppose. He tells me a great many diverting things he meets in Vanity Fair. Poor fellow, he'll soon be going South again, and I'm glad he can enjoy himself," observed Mrs. Warner.

"Enjoyment is not his only object," added Gerty. "I don't think he finds very much pleasure in them."

"He has lost his heart, I suppose. Ah well!" sighed Mrs. Warner; "it was to be expected. But I wish he had met his fate a little later on; he's going away so soon now that I'd like to see as much of him as possible."

Captain Dave did not enjoy the gayeties he frequented, nor was he in love. But whenever there was a probability that Rose-Marie would be present at an entertainment, there went he, and, without seeming to intend it, not unfrequently warded off the assiduous attentions of Eugène de St. Aignan, placing himself between them when he could do so without attracting attention, doing his best to monopolize her, not caring for the scowls of her angry lover, or noticing his somewhat aggressive manner. Even when he heard people whisper "the rivals," and laugh softly while they glanced towards him, he did not care; his object was to guard her as far as he could, seeing how defenceless, and knowing how impulsive she was. He was not in love with the beautiful, thoughtless girl; she was his old playmate, the friend of his sister,

and under all the surface faults of her life, he knew there was an affectionate, pure nature, full of good but ungoverned impulses.

He went to the ball at Secretary Blank's, at which, being the last of the season, there was a perfect crush; for some time he saw nothing of Rose-Marie. She was present, he knew, for he had heard one young lady say to another: "Did you notice, Bella, how very pale Rose-Marie Hazelton is to-night?"

"Yes, indeed; and I don't think she looked too happy. She's the strangest girl I ever knew. I wonder if St. Aignan is here?"

"I don't know; I have not seen him, but oh, dear! there's such a jam; it's cruel to bring such a mob together."

Captain Warner did not turn his head to ascertain who the ladies were that had spoken; what he had heard was sufficient for his purpose, and he slowly edged his way through the crowds of elegantly-dressed people, who were surging through the rooms; stopped now and then by friends, detained here and there by ladies, who would gladly have inveigled him into joining their party, intent all the time on the one thing that brought him there, and moving almost imperceptibly, until at length he reached the wide arched, door-way that gave him a view of the ball-room, where a number of couples were waltzing to the beautiful strains of the music of Strauss. He leaned against a pillar to rest his

lame ankle a moment, and as he did so, Rose-Marie flashed past, whirling along so swiftly that he could only see that the man with whom she was waltzing was not St. Aignan. Presently the music ceased, and most of those who had been dancing so merrily, visited the refreshment room, and Captain Warner saw that Rose-Marie had taken a seat just inside the draperies of a bow-window. There was no one with her; she had dismissed her partner, telling him in her pleasantly impertinent way, that she "was too tired to talk to him, and only wanted to rest, and get cool—no, thanks, no ices, if you please, but go away, and eat, drink, and be merry."

Captain Warner walked down the room towards her; he saw that she was very pale, and thought that her eyes had a half frightened expression in them as she glanced around, as if momentarily expecting some one. A group of ladies sauntering by, stopped, and hid her an instant from him; when they passed on, he found himself quite near her. He stopped, and was going to speak and shake hands in the old, friendly way; but she interrupted him, her voice and manner indicating that his presence had startled her, and was not agreeable.

"Oh! is it you?" she said, without a sign of pleasure at seeing him.

"Yes, indeed; I thought I should never find you," he answered, gayly; "you look tired; wouldn't you like to come out of this heavy atmosphere? Suppose we go to the conservatory?"

"Oh, no! thanks; it does very well here;" she said, coldly.

"You are separated from your party, I see; may I sit here until they come, or you wish to rejoin them?"

"No: you are watching me, Davy Warner, all the time; I feel, even when I don't see you, that I am under your *surveillance*; I tell you plainly I do not like it, or thank you for it. What right have you to do it?" she said, petulantly.

"None at all; I only want you to know I'm on hand should you need me, and by my devotion give people something new to talk about;" he answered, in quiet tones.

"How very kind," she said, with a curl of her lip; "don't feel obliged to keep a foolish promise; it is not likely that I shall need you, now or ever, so I release you entirely from it."

"Shall I go away?"

"Yes, please; I am out of sorts, Davy, and very disagreeable. Don't be angry with me if you can help it;" her lips quivered, and she held out her hand, saying: "Good-bye and good-night."

Captain Warner, familiar with her caprices, and just a little provoked, held her hand an instant, bade her good evening and left her. But her words: "Good-bye and good-night," her pale face, and the frightened look that came and went in her eyes, followed him; he had never in

all her moods seen her in one just like this; what did it mean? "Good-bye and good-night!" He looked at his watch, it was half-past eleven; the guests were all to leave at twelve, so as not to desecrate Ash Wednesday, which midnight would usher in. The wife of the Secretary was a devout Catholic, and the hour for coming and going had been printed on the cards of invitation. Captain Warner strolled into the supper-room, ate some stewed terrapin and drank a glass of wine, had a few words of pleasant chat with some of the young belles he had been meeting at entertainments here and there since the season began, then got away and went up to the gentlemen's dressing-room for his wraps, thinking to get off before the rush homewards began. He put on his overcoat and fur collar, and with cap in hand was making his way along the dimly-lighted hall, when he saw a cloaked and veiled figure standing at the head of the great stair-case, as if irresolute whether to go or stay. He would have passed on, but with a low sob she ran to him and grasping his hand, whispered: "Oh, Davy! Davy! just in time!"

"Good Heavens, Rose-Marie! What is the matter? Shall I take you home?"

"No! no! not home. Is your *coupé* here? Tell me quick, for the people are beginning to come up."

"Yes."

"Put me in it, and take me to Gerty! Oh Davy, make haste before my courage fails. I can't—I can't do it"—she said, in low frightened accents.

Not another word was spoken. With his strong arm around her, for she was almost fainting, and almost sooner than I can tell it, he had borne her out, and through the line of carriages, near the sidewalk to the opposite side of the street, where his *coupé* was stationed, opened the door, assisted her in, and seating himself by her side, directed the coachman to drive home as quickly as the horse could go.

"I wonder what on earth it all means," exclaimed Captain Dave when he found that Rose-Marie had fainted, and was leaning white and helpless against his shoulder. "It must be that late hours and constant excitement have broken her down, poor little thing!"

Yes, she had fainted, and could tell him nothing; and when she recovered she was lying on Gerty Warner's bed, with Captain Dave on one side and Gerty on the other, chafing her hands, and frightened nearly out of their senses. She looked at them both, threw her arms around Gerty's neck, sobbing as if her heart would break, then turned to Captain Dave and begged him to send a note to her father, telling him where she was, before he found a letter she had left for him on the library table.

"I'll go myself; it will be best," he said, in his straightforward way.

"Oh, dear Davy, how good and kind you are! You have saved me!" she sobbed. And Captain Dave, not knowing how or from what he had saved her, did not stop to ask questions, but hastened off through the sleet and rain and stormy winds, as heedless of them as of the midnight darkness, to see Mr. Hazelton and tell him that Rose-Marie would spend the night with his sister.

Mr. Hazelton was up, looking haggard and excited, and himself answered the hall-door bell; and when Captain Dave had delivered his message, the strong man covered his face with his hands, and wept like a child.

"Come in, Warner! The news you bring me is by far the best I ever had. My God! I have been so tortured with fury and remorse ever since I read the letter that poor, foolish, motherless child left on my library table for me, that I believe I should have blown my brains out before daylight if you hadn't come. I blame myself! I have neglected her too much; she had no guide, no training, and what she has said is just. Come in, Davy, for a moment, and tell me everything."

But Captain Warner, who had been so active in this little drama, did not know yet what it was all about, until after they got into the library and were seated. Mr. Hazelton gave him Rose-Marie's letter to read. Then he learned that she had intended to elope from the

ball with her lover, Eugène de St. Aignan, and be married immediately by a magistrate, before any attempt could be made to interrupt or follow them. "Our destination," she wrote, "is Europe. Take better care of poor little Don, dear papa, than you took of me, your wayward child. R-M."

Then Captain Dave was able, now that he had got hold of the clew, to tell Mr. Hazelton how, at the very last, her heart had failed her, and, dreading to come home on account of the letter she had left for him, she had asked him to take her to his sister.

"Poor little girl! Warner, I shall have to shoot that fellow!"

"Be thankful, Mr. Hazelton, that she is safe. What good would shooting him do? It would only blazon the affair to the world. He'll make no further attempt to win Rose-Marie. She gave him up voluntarily, and he will dread the ridicule of society too much to talk of the affair. He can do nothing. Let it all die a natural death."

"There's something in what you say, Warner; I'll think it over. Thank you a thousand times, and give my love to my daughter. I will see her to-morrow." Then they shook hands, and Captain Dave went home, bearing messages of love and forgiveness to the erring and repentant girl; Mr. Hazelton returning to his library, where he remained until day-dawn,

reviewing his past with newly-opened eyes, and making resolves which he meant, with God's help, to keep—not the least important of which was his determination to return to the Faith he had since his early manhood abandoned for the pursuit of wealth and honors.

CHAPTER XII.

A DISCOURSE ON LOVE. A MYSTERY SOLVED.

WHILE Captain Warner was absent on his midnight errand to Mr. Hazelton, Rose-Marie poured out her heart to Gerty without reserve. She confessed in broken accents that, smarting and resentful under the interdict laid by her father on all future intercourse with her lover, she had recklessly yielded to his persuasions to meet him, now in Jackson Square, and sometimes on the street, when they took long walks together; occasionally they met by mutual arrangement at "kettledrums" and afternoon lunch parties, where she accepted his attentions as usual, and allowed him to escort her home, thereby openly defying her father's commands, deceiving and disobeying him, and thus weaving closer and closer the meshes which placed her in St. Aignan's power. She had misgivings, it is true, and her conscience warned her at every false step, until, sometimes weary of it all, she almost determined to break off the affair entirely; but having gone so far, how could she retrace her steps? Finally, in a reckless moment, she consented to end all doubt and uncertainty by eloping with her lover from Mrs. Sec-

retary Blank's Shrove-Tuesday ball. The plan was for him not to appear at the ball, but to be in waiting with his mother's carriage, which the coachman was instructed to drive up the moment her own was called for, when she was to be ready to step into it from the carpeted pavement. This arrangement was made easy by the fact that Mr. Hazelton's coachman had received a message from his young mistress shortly after she arrived at Mrs. Blank's, saying, "he might go home, as she meant to return with Mrs. Blandore," a lady who frequently *chaperoned* her in society. From Secretary Blank's they were to proceed at once to a magistrate, who had been engaged to perform the marriage ceremony which would, legally at least, unite them beyond the power of father or friends to annul;—an unblest marriage, which promised neither happiness nor repose, because both the natural and divine laws would have been outraged by it. And while the gay dance-music was sounding in her ears, while every one seemed light-hearted, and bursts of laughter clear and merry rippled through the pauses, even while she herself whirled round in a dizzy waltz with the "maddening crowd," dreary doubts, and fears, and dread about the step she was going to take assailed her, tugging at her heart with such fierce pain that she wondered if her courage would not fail at the very last. It was in this state of mind that Captain Dave found her in the ball-

room, and met her so opportunely at the head of the staircase, as he was about leaving, when her courage had completely failed, and she was saved.

"Did you love St. Aignan, dear Rose-Marie?" Gerty asked, in grave, tender tones, a great pity softening her eyes.

"I don't know. I never did know; but I don't think so, for I was unhappy all the time. It was a sort of infatuation, I think. It was such fun, too, to make the conquest of a man that all the girls were doing their best to win. I think if I had really and truly loved him, my heart would not have failed me to-night. I should have gone with him, instead of being here with you. Oh, Gerty! how foolish and wicked I have been!" cried Rose-Marie, clinging to her friend, and sobbing on her breast. "And oh, Gerty! papa will never forgive me, and I don't deserve that he should. What *shall* I do?"

"Dear Rose-Marie, can you not ask the assistance of Our Blessed Lady, who has doubtless so far protected and saved you from the snares that were set for your feet? You know how she pities and helps us, when, tempted beyond our strength, we commit error—for she knows how weak we are."

"She knows, too, that it is all my own fault, and that for two years I have not approached the Sacraments, and have given all my time and thoughts to worldly pleasure. Oh, Gerty! I have been so vain and heartless; what shall I do?"

"Just come to her like a little child, who, having wandered into the desert in search of flowers, found only thorns that pierced and wounded her feet, and sent her back crying to her mother's breast for refuge and forgiveness;" said Gerty, in low, gentle tones.

"I wish I could, Gerty; I *will* try when all this is over. I can think of nothing now, except the dreadful trouble I am in, and my father's anger. Maybe he won't let me come home again, and will keep Don away from me."

There was a tap at the door, and, lifting Rose-Marie's hot, throbbing head from her breast to the pillow, Gerty went to see who sought admittance. It was Captain Dave.

"Tell her," he said, "that her father knows all. He had read the note she left for him, and was half crazy; but when he heard that she was safe here with you, he was relieved beyond measure. After hearing all I had to tell him, he told me to give her his love, and say that he blamed himself more than he did her, and would try in the future to be a better father than he had been in the past. He will come to bring her home to-morrow, or rather to-day, for it is now Ash Wednesday, 2 o'clock a. m. Good night, or good morning, as you please; I'm going to get an hour or two's sleep before we—Jones and myself—go to early Mass." And after Captain Dave had kissed Gerty's pale cheek, she ran back to impart to Rose-Marie the good news, the message of

peace and forgiveness he had brought; and the noble-hearted youth marched up to his sleeping-room, well satisfied with his night's work, and was soon lost in the peaceful slumber of the just.

Rose-Marie was deeply moved when Gerty repeated all that her brother had said. Her father's message of love and forgiveness, his accusing himself more than he blamed her, touched the very best instincts of her nature, and made her feel her fault more keenly, and resolve that with God's blessed help he should not outdo her, who was so unworthy of such generous love, and would try to render back to him all that he gave, by such cheerful duty and willing obedience as were due him. Tears stole softly from the girl's closed eyes; the passion of grief, remorse and dread which had been so bitterly mingled, and had shaken her with such wild emotion, gave way to calmer and more salutary impressions. The crimson had faded out of her cheeks, her face was now pale and restful, and Gerty, who sat by her, holding her hand and watching her countenance, would have felt alarmed at her whiteness and silence, had she not seen the glistening tears as they flowed, and noticed that her lips moved in voiceless prayer. Rose-Marie was finding her way back to the safe shelter of her Mother's breast, after being "stung and pierced by the thorns of the desert, where she had been straying in the fond hope of finding flowers."

Gerty slipped softly away from her side, leaving her alone with her good angel and her penitent.

The next morning, at 7 o'clock, Gerty and Rose-Marie were in church, kneeling together at the sanctuary to receive upon their foreheads the cross of the ashes of palms, by which act the faithful are reminded of the shortness of life and the certainty of death, of the vanity of all earthly things and the survival of hope in a truer life, which, like the fabled phoenix, rises out of the ashes that consumed it, to a new and brighter existence. After the *hosannas* and the spreading of palm-branches, came the crucifixion; and it seems meet that through the ashes of the palms we should be reminded of the inevitable hour when this mortal life, crucified by death and its bitter anguish, shall yield itself to the dust out of which it came.

The Warners and their guest, Peter Jones, received Holy Communion at this opening solemnity of the penitential season with such devout intentions as the spirit of their divine Faith inspired. Rose-Marie saw them approach and reverently kneel to receive the Bread of Life. She bowed her head upon her hands, and the bitter thought arose: "But for my own folly I too could receive." Then

"Like the leaf the prophet threw
Into the bitter wave,"

came the remembrance of her father's forgive-

ness, giving her hope of the forgiveness of Him whom above all she had offended, and of reconciliation through penitence with her neglected faith; and the *Salve Regina* and the *Ave Maria* she breathed were full of a fervor she had been very long a stranger to.

After Gerty and herself reached home and were going up stairs to lay off their things, they met Captain Dave coming down, looking as if nothing unusual had happened, and as if her being there was an every-day occurrence. His brave, handsome face wore a welcoming smile, and he held out his hand. Grasping it in both her own, Rose-Marie, with the impulsiveness of true feeling, said: "Dear old Davy, what should I have done, had you not been there?"

"I'm very glad I was there, little girl. You remember the compact over which we shook hands once? I, as a knight bound by his vow, should have been false had I not watched over you when I saw danger threatening you."

"Was that it, Davy? And I was so cross to you sometimes! Never mind! I'm going to be good now," she said, smiling in his face with something of the old brightness.

"All right," he answered. "Both of you hurry down to our feast of 'lentils and brown bread.' I say, Gerty, this fasting time will come pretty hard on our pampered appetites, won't it?"

"I think it will, Davy, dear; but all the more merit, you know," she replied.

And Captain Warner, whistling, as Rose-Marie told him later, like a school-boy going past a graveyard at night, to keep up his courage, ran down stairs to await them in the dining-room.

Mr. Hazelton came in his carriage about eleven o'clock, and after a private interview with his daughter, in which mutual forgiveness was asked and given, and earnest promises for the future made to each other, a perfect reconciliation, followed by a newly-born trust and confidence between them, was established, never to be broken again by either. After taking an affectionate leave of the Warners, showing their deep sense of gratitude by manner more than by words, father and daughter went home together, feeling nearer to each other than ever before. Holding Don in a warm embrace as she knelt on the floor beside him, Rose-Marie covered his face with tears and kisses, until, frightened by her strange mood, he struggled to get away from her, but she held him fast and said: "Oh, Don! you don't know how near I came to losing you, dear, precious darling!"

"What makes you cry so? Did you bweak sumpfin?" Don knew that breaking things was the rock upon which he most frequently split, and by a quick process of inductive reasoning, known only to himself, he supposed it to be the only cause that could have brought his beautiful sister to grief. But she soothed and car-

essed and comforted him by giving him her costly little watch, that played two sad, ghostly tunes, to amuse himself with, with almost the certainty that it would be broken or thrown into the fire before his fun with it was over. She did not care, for the sense of her escape from that which would—she felt now—have ruined her whole life; the new relations established between her father and herself; and being here, at home again with Don—all made her so happy that she was willing to suffer any such loss with patience as an expression of her gratitude. In fact all the costly treasures she possessed were deemed insignificant and worthless, compared with the magnitude of the favors she had received, and above all, the strong, sweet hope, which, like a fair lily springing out of black mire, had grown out of her recent griefs and humiliations, a promise of reconciliation with the divine Faith whose practice she had so long forsaken. She was quite in earnest in this purpose; the firmness and energy hitherto directed and concentrated on vain, empty pleasure, she meant to turn to better and higher things, until her feet were planted firmly on a safe foundation. She would have a great deal to contend with, she knew, and much to overcome in herself, but she was resolved, with God's help, and the help of our Blessed Mother, to try, and as she possessed, as I have shown, a pretty strong will of her own, it is fair to conclude that having once put her hand to the plough, she would not turn back.

Eugène de St. Aignan, after the first fury of his disappointment was over, called to ask, or rather demand, an explanation of the deception that Rose-Marie had practised towards him, but he was not admitted; then he sent notes, which were returned unopened. He felt that he had been outwitted in some way, but the escapade was a profound secret which he, although enraged and baffled, would not speak of, for fear of ridicule and the laughter of society. When he found how useless were all attempts to obtain an interview, or renew by note his intercourse with Rose-Marie, he rushed home after his last futile call, ordered his horse—a new and almost untried purchase—mounted him, and galloped off at breakneck speed towards the country beyond Georgetown, where steep roads with precipitous sides, and angry torrents dashed over the rocks below, give a wild and savage aspect to the scenery. Leaving him to pursue his mad ride, I will go back to the dear Warners, who are in the cheerful sitting-room, which is their favorite spot, and which they all love, because there, of all places in the house, reserve, or what Uncle Max was in the habit of calling “society manners,” was thrown off, and every one felt at liberty to do pretty much as he pleased. Mr. Warner and Captain Dave had drawn up their chairs near the centre table, each of them enjoying a cigar, and were listening to a new poem Uncle Max had sent Gerty, and which she was reading aloud.

The poem was "Lucile," and the tripping verse and its odd adaptation to the prosaic forms of life, made it very attractive, while the descriptive portions and striking comparisons and metaphors, that were sprinkled like diamond-dust throughout, still more enchained the attention, until a phase of unholy love began to tarnish the fair pages. Gerty read on, scarcely comprehending the drift of the part of which the dark, passionate, sinful Duc de Luvois is the hero, when a hearty "good evening" at the open door interrupted her. It was Father Powell, Mrs. Warner's spiritual director, who had been making her an unusually long visit that evening, and whom nobody knew to be in the house until his pleasant voice made them aware of the fact. "Lucile" was quickly thrown aside, and each one of the little circle sprang forward with outstretched hand and warm, welcome words to greet him, and urge him to come in and sit awhile; he yielded, and seated himself in the luxurious chair that was offered, with hat in hand, however, a signal that his visit would be a brief one. Father Powell was a great favorite with the chosen few admitted to his personal friendship; I say few advisedly, for, while he was the friend of all, in a way, the pressure of his pastoral duties allowed him but a small number of intimacies—a sacrifice which could not but be painful to a nature like his, which was genial and kindly, and helped to keep his sympathy

with human nature alive. He did not tell people that it was a sin and an offence to Almighty God and His holy will for them to weep and grieve when they were afflicted by some sore trial, and that he knew better how to measure their hearts' bitterness when the most tender and sacred human ties were riven, than the bereaved ones themselves; or look upon the harmless gayety of others with sour countenance, and call it folly and levity. He knew there was a time to weep and a time to laugh; and while he could reprove with severity when necessary, he was careful never, by word, or act, or look, to crush the reed already bruised. There was nothing of extraordinary sanctity apparent in his daily life; only God Himself knew how fairly and beautifully his spiritual life was rounded out by the faithfully-performed duties of his high vocation. Only in secret did his good works blossom, only in secret did he work and win the beatitudes which would one day crown him with eternal rewards. He was also a cultivated scholar who did not disdain modern literature, and kept himself *au courant* with the history and progress of his own times, weighing events by the grand rule of God's designs, and learning wise lessons of the nothingness of this world and the powers thereof, by discerning how perpetually they repeated themselves, without taking the least advantage of the blunders and mistakes of the past, going blindly

to destruction by the same old ways and under the very same circumstances that had wrecked kingdoms and annihilated nations—so that, by the study of human nature and of human events, he was a more than usually sagacious man.

The Warners had scarcely welcomed him and settled themselves to enjoy his unexpected visit, when the hall door opened, and Peter Jones came in, intending to go direct to his room; but as he was passing he got a glimpse of Father Powell, and stepped in to speak to him, only too glad of so good an excuse to be in the family circle again, if but for a few minutes. Once there, however, he had not the courage to go away, and stayed.

"You were reading aloud, Gerty, I think," Father Powell said, after shaking hands with Peter Jones, and telling him how glad he was to see him, for he had a thorough respect for the young fellow.

"Yes, Father, a foolish love story, and in poetry, too," she replied, her cheeks slightly flushing.

"Why foolish, my child? All love is not foolish," was the reply.

"It is awfully sentimental and improbable—I mean the book; it may be fascinating to some as a romance, but it strikes me that the best part of it is made to sink in interest below the level of the worst. Perhaps if I knew anything experimentally about love, I might be able to analyze the story more lucidly," answered Gerty,

with slight embarrassment. She looked up, and met Peter Jones's eyes fixed with a penetrating, inquiring glance upon her; and to her great discomfort, she felt the blood surging to her face, and knew that it must be the color of a "red, red rose."

"A virtuous love, my child, is a very sacred thing—a principle implanted in human nature to elevate it, to make it more perfect, and bring it nearer to God, by a true accordance with His designs," said Father Powell.

"That sort of love is rare, I'm afraid," spoke up Captain Dave; "were it not, we should not have so many unhappy marriages, divorces, and other miseries." He was contrasting in his own mind the love as defined by Father Powell, with the so-called passion whose snares Rose-Marie had so happily escaped.

"That sort of love was more the rule in the Ages of Faith than the exception, as it is in this era of the world. As heresy and infidelity spread, sacred principles and beliefs, with submission to the divine precepts, were undermined, or utterly perverted to sensual uses by the unfaithful, and nothing more so than this true, sacred sentiment known in its common sense as love. Christian love, in which duty and religious obligation become essential elements of the passionate emotions of the heart, is what I mean. I wish the young and inexperienced could be made to understand the definition of a true Christian love,

and how great the contrast is between it and that false sentiment also called love! It would save no end of misery and sin. I suppose it is one of those evils which, uncontrolled by the teachings and precepts of our holy Faith, must continue to drag along with its train of suffering and wrong, to the day of reckoning."

"The Ages of Faith show many examples of that true and sacred passion you speak of, Father," said Peter Jones, who had been listening to Father Powell with eager attention; "the literature of those days is just full of it. St. Louis of France cherished for his wife, Marguerite, to the last hour of his life, the tenderness of his early years; on the ring he always wore he had engraved these words: 'God, France, Marguerite,' and on showing it used to say: '*Hors cel anel n'ai point d'amour.*' In literature what is more touching than the pure love of Roland and his betrothed Aude, in the 'Romance of Roncevaux;' or the history of misfortune endured by Gerard de Rousillon and his wife; or the holy love of the dear Elizabeth of Hungary and her husband, Louis of Thuringia!"

"In Germany," continued Father Powell, with a nod of approval to Peter Jones, who had thus by some inexplicable impulse, been drawn out of his shell; "the adopted country of the dear Elizabeth, this feature of Christian literature was more general and more loved than elsewhere. In the Niebelungen, in Sigefroid and

Chriemhilde, are found the brightest and most popular examples. This light of pure love irradiated the most beautiful historical traditions, such as those of 'Henry the Lion,' of 'Florentia,' of 'Genevieve of Brabant,' 'Count Ulric,' and others of equal repute and interest. There were not many mixed marriages in those days, my friends," said Father Powell.

"How about St. Monica, whose husband was a pagan, and converted by her prayers?" said Mr. Warner, with a twinkle in his eyes.

"And are there many Monicas to be found, who, by the grace of God, may risk the dangers of mixed marriages with safety even to their own faith? What happened to Solomon, the wisest man the earth ever knew, after he consorted with his Assyrian wives and the daughters of Heth? He built temples to their idols for them, where the incense of their false worship floated up, and blended with the very smoke of the altars of sacrifice in the Temple on Mt. Sion, thereby participating in their sin. Solomon, but for the infinite mercy and patience of God, was in extreme danger. But, indeed, my dear children, I have overstayed my time, and must bid you good-night. Don't forget this, however, that if in some cases a believing wife converts an unbelieving husband, the instances are rare, and are always attended with risk. Good-bye, and God bless you."

Mr. Warner and Captain Dave attended Father

Powell to the door, and Peter Jones and Gerty were left a moment together. He said, as if thinking aloud: "A love like that Father Powell speaks of would bring life nearer heaven than it is now; don't you think so?"

"It's a subject I have given very little thought to," she answered, with a pleasant laugh.

"And it is such love as I hope to win and give; it must be that or none. Did you know that I shall be going away soon, Miss Warner? My father is coming."

Gerty gave an almost imperceptible start, and said, "It is rather sudden, is it not?"

"He is coming on a special mission to your Government; when everything is settled, we shall return home together."

"Home! To England?" she asked, wonderingly.

"No: to Germany. After he comes, a question vital to my future happiness can be settled, and only then;" he said, in low tones.

But that was all. Honor sealed his lips, and bidding her "Good-night," somewhat abruptly, he went away up stairs.

"A German! Well, I am glad of it; that ends everything;" said Gerty, leaning her elbow on the mantel, and resting her fair cheek on her hand, thinking many thoughts.

Mr. Warner went up stairs to talk over the events of the day with his wife—at least such of them as he knew would interest her; and Cap-

tain Dave, having bolted and barred the hall door, came back to the sitting-room to smoke his cigar. Finding Gerty still there, he asked, with a merry laugh, how she had liked Father Powell's discourse on love.

"I am still trying to sound its depths, Davy, for I am not entirely convinced that there is such a thing on earth, outside of romance and poetry," she answered, trying to smile.

"I must say, though, Gerty, that he gave us good authority for believing there is. It is really quite encouraging! I thought father had him cornered, however, about mixed marriages, until he brought Solomon and the daughters of Heth to the front," said Captain Dave, sending up a cloud of smoke from his lips.

"Yes, I think he had father at a loss there: and then, like a discreet general, he retreated in good order," she laid, laughing. "But, Davy dear, have you heard anything about any one's coming, or any one's going very soon?"

"Oh, that reminds me! I did hear that Jones' father would be here in a day or two, and that the dear old fellow would leave us as soon as he arrived. If I were not expecting to be off in a short time myself, I should think it very bad news, for I have learned to love him like a brother. He's awfully blue about something, I've noticed; perhaps he doesn't think it the pleasantest news in the world."

"Did he tell you about it himself?" she asked.

"No: father mentioned it this morning; but he was in a great hurry to see a gentleman who was waiting for him at his office, and I had not time to ask a question. Who told you, Gerty?"

"He told me himself just now. Did you know he is a German, Davy?"

"A what?" exclaimed Captain Dave, as much astonished as if she had suggested a gorilla or a kangaroo. "How do you know?"

"From his own lips, Davy," she answered, quietly; "but good-night; I must run up and arrange mother's oratory, for Father Powell will be here in the morning, about six o'clock, to give her Holy Communion."

"And I shall march on Peter Jones *instanter*, and question him—so much that he will be struck with the idea that I am a peripatetic note of interrogation. I don't like to have my friends swooped off in this sort of way, without knowing why."

"One thing more, Davy: don't speak of having heard it from me," said Gerty, turning a moment with her hand upon the door-knob, and her face flushed with that delicate tint so becoming to her.

"But why? I can't see. There's no harm in mentioning that you told me; but I won't, certainly, if you wish me not to," he said, noticing a certain expression of distress that had come into her face.

"Thanks; I would much prefer you not to mention my name, Davy dear. Good-night."

Captain Dave smoked in silence for some time. He was thinking, and presently something dawned upon his mind which explained—if he was right—why Peter Jones had been behaving so strangely for a time past, and why his sister had made it a point that her name was not to be mentioned as his informant.

“It makes it a little awkward for me to go and question Jones about his going away, if what I suspect is the fact; but I shall go up to his room anyhow, and tell him how sorry I am at the prospect of parting with him. I’ll let him know I heard of it from father. I’m sure that will be no harm. Then if he chooses to tell me about his plans, or anything else, all right.” Then Captain Dave threw the end of his cigar into the grate, and went up to Peter Jones’s room, where he was made welcome, and told that he was doing the kindest thing in the world to come where he was just being wished for. It was very evident that Peter Jones was yearning for some one to open his heart to, for as soon as his friend was seated he began to talk of his father’s expected arrival, and from that went backwards to his early life, his home in Germany, the isolated existence he had led in universities, separated from all those sacred domestic ties which form the happiness and safeguard of youth; rarely seeing his father, who was either away at foreign courts to represent his government, or, if at home, actively engaged in the

intricate work of political statecraft. And so they talked on and on, until the "wee sma' hours," the one giving, the other receiving, sacred, manly confidences, with sympathy, and with such encouragement as he felt free to offer;—their friendship for each other cemented and never to be broken so long as both should live. There were two points, however, which made Captain Dave sleepless after he finally retired for the night. Peter Jones had laid his heart bare to him about Gerty, had told him all his doubts, and the difficulties that beset him, and why he had felt in honor bound, as he could not speak, to withdraw himself from her society until such time as he might be free to try and win her for his wife. That Gerty loved Peter Jones he did not doubt; but Peter Jones was a foreigner, and had he not once heard her say that if she "could not marry an American, she would die an old maid?" He knew that Gerty was a girl of a very decided character, and as firm as a rock—her mind once made up—and he knew that neither the high rank and possessions of Peter Jones's family, nor even her own preference for him, with the consent of all around, could change her determination, if what she had said that day was from her heart, instead of being an ebullition called forth by Rose-Marie Hazelton's nonsense. The next point was the fact that Peter Jones was Peter Jones no longer, but Petrus Johannes Baron von Einsdel, only son

and heir of Count von Einsdel, one of the most distinguished men of his country, and recently appointed by his sovereign Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States. Would he consent to his son's marrying the daughter of a plain American citizen, even should she be willing to accept him? Would not certain regulations of the Imperial Court interfere to separate them, and prevent the marriage? Captain Dave's brain felt more confused over all this than it had ever felt under a ten hours' fire in some of the battles he had been in, when Minie balls and grape were whistling over his head and around him, while cannon rattled their wild thunders in accompaniment. He at last fell into a troubled sleep and dreamed he was a Nihilist; but sprang up wide awake and covered with cold sweat, just as he was in the act of applying a match which was to explode a mine of such extent that the whole German Empire would be blown to atoms. Captain Dave plunged his head into a basin of cold water, said a Hail Mary, and again sought his pillow, where he quickly dropped into such a deep sleep that he did not know what had become of himself until a bright gleam of sunshine across his face the next morning, awoke him. He was just in time for breakfast, and to go with Peter Jones to the depot, where he was to take the train for New York to meet his father, who was expected to arrive by the German steamer the day following. Gerty had told him, while

she was pouring out his coffee, that she had promised to spend this morning with Rose-Marie, and Captain Dave, instead of returning home after seeing his friend off, thought he would drop in on Uncle Max, whom he found in his office, and for a rarity, disengaged and pining for a long stroll somewhere in the sunshine and air. "You are just in time, Davy! What do you say to a walk as far as the college?" was his greeting, when he looked up and saw who had come in.

"With the greatest pleasure. I don't know what put it into my head, but I was just thinking of it as I drew near the house. It is a splendid day for a tramp," was the ready answer. And in a few minutes they were on their way towards Georgetown, sauntering leisurely along, beguiling the way with pleasant converse, loitering on the bridge like two school-boys, to watch the bright waters of the creek that divides the old city from the new, as it ran sparkling in the sunshine towards the river which flowed on with majestic sweep a short distance away.

"Suppose we hail a boat, Uncle Max, and row across to the Virginia side?" suggested Captain Dave.

"Not to-day; I hope to find Father Grafton at home, and in case we do, I have a little matter of business I want to talk over with him. Some time before you go I should enjoy nothing more than a row on the river with you, Davy" said Uncle Max, moving on.

They walked slowly up the old Georgetown streets towards the college which crowns the northwestern heights overhanging the Potomac. The president of the college, Father Grafton, was an old class-mate of Max Ashton's, and they had ever since continued to be intimate friends. They went up-stairs and tapped on the door of his private sitting-room; a hearty voice within bade them enter, which they did without further ceremony. They saw that Father Grafton was, or had been, engaged in close conversation with a gentleman, as they entered, and would have withdrawn instantly, but it was too late; he saw them, and came forward with quick step and welcoming hand to greet them.

"I see you are engaged; we will not interrupt you," said Uncle Max, in a low voice; "we'll stroll through the grounds, and return."

"You'll do nothing of the sort, Ashton. Your coming—both of you—is the most opportune thing in the world; it has saved me from a fruitless visit to your rooms, where, of course, I should not have found you, so come in and sit down," responded Father Grafton.

The gentleman they had observed on entering the room, and whose back had been turned towards them, now rose. Captain Dave's intense surprise may be imagined when he saw—whom of all the world he least expected to see there—Eugène de St. Aignan! His first impulse was to excuse himself and withdraw from the pres-

ence of the man who had been so curiously mixed up in his life; but before he could do so Father Grafton was introducing them to his friend, Monsieur Léonce de Moret, from New Orleans.

Captain Dave was so overcome with astonishment, and quick revulsion of feeling, that he turned very pale, and gazed fixedly on the other's face, as he mechanically offered his hand. Father Grafton was saying: "You will understand how opportunely you and Captain Warner have come, Ashton, when I inform you that Monsieur de Moret brings letters of introduction to you both, but not knowing exactly where to find you, came to present one or two he had for me first, hoping that I could direct him to you. And here you are, drawn by some magnetic attraction, or spell, or by the good influence of your guardian angels, to the very spot where you are wanted. Monsieur de Moret has been telling me some very interesting passages of his life, for which the reading of your old journal, Ashton, and Warner's adventure in New Orleans—which you related to me—had in some degree prepared me."

"Then you are indeed—" began Captain Dave, drawing his chair nearer to Léonce de Moret, while Uncle Max and Father Grafton, leaving the young men together, seated themselves near an open window, where they were soon deeply engaged in a low-voiced conversation; "then you are indeed——"

"Léonce de Moret, whose life you saved one morning in New Orleans, in the old house of Dom Pedro del Alaya," he responded, grasping Captain Dave's hand with great emotion.

"But how did you find out that it was I? Who told you my name? You were unconscious—utterly so—up to the time I left New Orleans?" asked Captain Dave, eagerly.

"Circumstantial details of the whole affair, in connection with my case, were kept by the surgeons in Paris, who had me under treatment. After my recovery they were placed in my hands."

"And the—your brother—or double—or twin! Is he not here in Washington? I thought you were St. Aignan when I came into the room and first saw you. I feel dazed yet, for I cannot realize that you are yourself, and not he," said Captain Dave, with a countenance full of bewilderment and concern.

"I have a brother, Eugène de St. Aignan—is he really here in Washington?" was asked, in eager tones.

"Yes; I saw him as late as yesterday; he has been living here all winter, but pardon me—I do not quite understand about the difference in your names."

"True. It is not unusual abroad for one son—say the heir—to hold the father's name, while another may bear the mother's; it is so with us. I can never thank you sufficiently, Captain

Warner, for your humanity to me that dreadful morning you found me lying almost dead in the cellar of my old house, where, but for your timely assistance, I should undoubtedly have died."

"Your faithful old servant's shrieks led me to the spot."

"So I was told. Poor old Chapita! faithful indeed. But how few would have rushed into an old, walled-in house like that, in a hostile city? How could you tell that you would not get into a trap that would cost you dearly?"

"I acted upon impulse at first; then, after I was in, and found how silent everything was, except when the mysterious shrieks rent the air, I did feel some apprehensions such as you name; but humanity urged me to go on, and I found you, just in time, they said, to save your life. But tell me—was it discovered who had attempted to murder you?"

"No one attempted or designed murder, Captain Warner; I will explain. My brother Eugène and myself went to New Orleans together to look into my affairs, and we were glad to find ourselves in the old Del Alaya house, which my father used to talk about a great deal, but which neither of us remembered. My particular object in going there was not alone for the gratification of a pardonable desire to visit the home of my ancestors, but for the purpose of finding out whether or not certain secret treasures concealed

there, to which my father gave me the key on his death-bed, were safe. We had heard of the occupation of the city by the Federal troops, and fearing to send any confidential lines to his factor about the matter, lest they might be intercepted, and his house stripped, and perhaps razed to the ground in search of them, my father did nothing but brood over it, until his disorder was so much increased by his mental disquiet that it hastened his death. The treasures referred to were part of my mother's inheritance from the Del Alayas through generations, and I promised my father, in the most sacred manner, not to reveal to a living being where they were concealed. He made me take a solemn oath upon my honor as a Christian gentleman never to do so. My brother, unfortunately, stepped into the chamber, unperceived by either of us, and overheard my promise, from which he could only learn that there was something secreted somewhere, a knowledge of which my father had imparted to me alone. It was a great trial to me to have a secret that I could not share with him when he urged me to do so, after my father was buried; for we had grown up together, loving and confiding entirely in each other, and it exasperated, wounded, and made him jealous and unhappy, when, bound by my oath, I positively refused to explain to him. I could not, would not break my word so pledged, and a shadow came between us which he tried to conceal, and I tried not to see; but it continued.

"We went to New Orleans together, and he urged me again to share my secret with him; and when I again told him that by reason of my oath it was impossible, he got into a rage, accused me of selfishness, called me a sneak, in short, roused me to fury, and for the first time in our lives we quarrelled."

"He was not your own brother, De Moret?"

"No; but I beg you will pardon me if I decline referring to the peculiar relation that exists between us," answered the young man, with quiet reserve.

"Certainly; excuse the question, and tell me what followed the quarrel; I am deeply interested."

"After the quarrel he never left me to myself by day or night. His anger seemed to have passed away; mine really had, and I showed in every way my willingness to make it all up; but I felt that he was all the time watching my movements to discover some clew to my secret. It was awfully irksome, and I did not see where it would end; for his disposition was of that tenacious sort that nothing ever induced him to give up an object he had once set his heart upon. He was now extremely kind and affectionate, and exercised all his wonderfully fascinating powers, hoping that in an hour of unguarded confidence I would betray myself. One morning--that fatal morning--I awoke with the dawn, and seeing that Eugène was in a pro-

found sleep—his room opened into mine—I dressed myself, keeping my eye upon him; but as he did not stir, I felt that my opportunity to visit the secret place, indicated by my father, had come at last, and I slipped noiselessly out into the corridor, down stairs, and was just going down the steep stone steps, leading into the cellar, when I heard quick footsteps. It was Eugène. He sprang after me. The space was narrow between me and the wall; there was no hand-rail, and I was on the outside. He dashed past. I lost my balance and fell, striking my head, the surgeons thought, on the stone floor below. That is all I remember, Captain Warner, until I awoke one morning and found myself lying upon a table, and saw strange, grave, anxious faces around me. I was bound, and my head was bandaged; I looked from one to another, and asked them where I was.”

“It has saved him,” said one to the others, speaking in French; “I will tell him: he must not be agitated by finding himself in a strange place.” Then he informed me, in very quiet tones, that I had been hurt on my head, and had been brought to Paris to be placed under the treatment of Dr. Brown-Sequard, who had successfully removed some fragments of bone that were pressing on my brain, and through that on every faculty of my being. He told me to keep perfectly quiet, or I should be a dead man in less than twenty-four hours. I was only too glad to

lie still and enjoy the sense of being awake. I was removed from the table, without jolt or jar, to a cot prepared for me that stood near it, which was borne by strong, steady arms to a pleasant, airy room, where, after giving me a composing draught, they left me alone. Everything, from the moment I started to go down the cellar-steps of the old house in New Orleans, up to that hour when I awoke on the table in the operating room, was a blank—a long, dreary, dreamless night—yes, a very nothingness! To avoid all danger of inflammation, the greatest caution was observed; the quiet movements of my nurse, and the visits of the surgeons, were the only things that broke the monotony of my existence; but I was satisfied—I was conscious of life, thought, and memory. Since my recovery, I have been in search of my brother, who, I fear, has almost felt, ever since the accident, as if the brand of Cain was on his forehead. That which happened was unintentional on his part, I am firmly convinced: Eugène would never have harmed me.”

Captain Dave Warner had no such faith in Eugène de St. Aignan, but he was discreetly silent; he only said: “You are remarkably like each other.”

“Yes, each of us bears a marked resemblance to our father. There was a slight difference, though, which only those most intimate with us ever observed: his arms were longer than mine,

his wrists larger; the joint of the great toe of each foot, also, was more prominent. It was a source of great *c'hagrin* to him, as he said it ruined the symmetry of his feet. I have a letter of introduction to Mr. Ashton, from my father's old friend and banker in New York, and hope he will be able to attend to some of my affairs for me. If he should consent to do so, it will involve his going with me to New Orleans."

Father Grafton and Max Ashton had been talking steadily in an undertone about some subject of absorbing interest, while the two young men conversed. Uncle Max had been struck by the great resemblance of Léonce de Moret to his father's portrait, which had so arrested his attention on his visit years before to the old Del Alaya house. Each had the same finely-chiselled features, the same noble type of manly beauty, differing only in the lower part of the face, which in the portrait was faulty, sensual, weak; in that of his son, firm, gentle, and expressive of goodness and purity. He wondered if the other son inherited the defective feature which marred the otherwise noble countenance of his father.

"Shall we walk together, Monsieur de Moret?" inquired Uncle Max, as they all stood together, saying last words before taking leave. "Our way leads us past Madame de St. Aignan's house"—

"Is my brother married?" he asked, in startled tones.

"Oh, no; I referred to his mother, with whom he lives," answered Uncle Max, feeling a little annoyed by an intuitive sensation of having said something awkward.

"His mother, Mr. Ashton?" said Léonce, whose face had suddenly grown very pale. By this time they were outside the college gates.

"Yes. I hope you may find your brother at home; at any rate, you can leave your card and address at the door should he not be in," answered Uncle Max, in tones as indifferent and cheerful as he could command.

"I will do so; thank you very much, Mr. Ashton. I am extremely anxious to see him, to set his mind at rest about an affair which, I know, is troubling him," he replied.

"We will go round by the Heights, Dave; it will be pleasanter for Monsieur de Moret; there are so many beautiful views to be seen, which are made more picturesque by the numerous encampments upon the hills, far and near."

Then they walked on, talking of the war, and of the military probabilities which just then were overshadowed by great uncertainty and no little dread to the loyal heart of the nation; but somehow, while admiring the views, and listening with interest to what was being said, Léonce de Moret invariably led the way back to the subject which most of all occupied his mind—his brother. "How was he looking?" "Did he go a great deal into society?" "Had he made

friends?" were some of the questions he asked, which Captain Dave answered as well and as amiably as he could. They had proceeded as far as Oak-hill cemetery, from which point the view of the old and new cities, the broad, bright river, and the Virginia hills on the southern side, is unequalled. On the opposite side of the road workmen were engaged demolishing the old "Carolina House," one of the stately historic mansions on the "Heights," which was to be replaced by a showy modern structure for one of the *nouveaux-riches* cast up by the war. The road-side was piled up with bricks, blocks of stone and lumber.

"What vandalism!" exclaimed Uncle Max; "to tear down an elegant old home, clustering with historic memories that linked the present with more refined and patriotic times, and gave us traditions of more cultivated generations than our own. It is simply atrocious!"

Just then the clatter and ringing of iron-shod hoofs attracted the attention of the party, and turning quickly, they saw a gentleman on horse-back galloping at full speed up the steep road from the town below, the fierce, splendid animal urged by spur and curb-bit to do his best, —his pointed silky ears set back, his eyes full of fire, his thin, delicate nostrils distended and quivering, white foam frothing from his mouth, and only restrained from a mad run by the masterly hand that held the reins.

"It is Eugène! Eugène, look! It is I, your brother!" shouted Léonce, as the horse and his rider came nearer. He stood in advance of the others, quite on the curb-stone, to attract his brother's attention. St. Aignan gave him one look, turned ghastly white, and in that brief second of time lost the mastery of his horse, which reared, and, giving a wild spring, threw him crashing down amongst the blocks of stone piled on the road-side, then dashed with mad speed from the spot.

Eugène de St. Aignan did not move. He lay partly on his back, his face as white as the whitest marble there, his black curling hair tossed back from forehead and temples.

"His neck is broken; God have mercy on his soul!" said Max Ashton, when they reached him. "Let us lift him off the stones, and lay him upon the grass: life may not be entirely extinct."

Workmen crowded around, every one offering help, and very tenderly their rough hands assisted in removing him to a place covered with grass and wild thyme, Léonce clinging to his lifeless hand, almost beside himself with grief. They dropped some brandy between his pale lips from a small flask that some one offered, bathed his temples, and chafed his hands; but the stillness and whiteness of death remained unchanged. Captain Warner had gone at full speed to the Military Hospital, which was only a few squares distant, to bring a surgeon. He could not help

thinking of that morning in New Orleans, when he had gone on much the same errand for Léonce; the coincidence was passing strange, and he wondered, for the first time in his life, if there could be such a thing as fate, and why his destiny should be so mysteriously tangled with that of two men who were strangers, and who, beyond a humane sentiment, were literally nothing to him!

The surgeons came at once, with hospital nurses, and a stretcher. "Life is not extinct," was the verdict. "If he has a home, let him be removed to it."

"How?"

"On the stretcher. An ambulance would not be safe; the lifting in and out, and the jolting over the rough pavement of the street, might be fatal to him. We do not know the extent or character of his injuries, and will accompany him to his home."

Max Ashton saw that it was the only feasible plan to pursue, and the insensible body was laid upon the stretcher, a light blanket was thrown over it, and strong, steady arms bore him homewards, his brother ever nearest to him, while the others followed in sad procession.

Madame Zoraya, hearing that some one wounded or dead was being brought into her house, thought of the vicious-looking horse her son had ridden off on so gayly an hour or two ago, and rushed down into the hall, sure that

the animal had thrown him, and broken his neck or his limbs. The first person she met was Léonce de Moret, and, overcome with terror, she threw her arms around him, exclaiming: "Oh, Eugène, my son! thank God you are safe! I feared it was you I saw them bringing in." Léonce bowed his face over the woman's beautiful head; his tears fell warm upon it; he did not speak, dreading to undeceive her. His silence startled her; she lifted up her head, gazed a moment into his face with a wild, questioning glance, then laid a hand on each of his shoulders, pushing him off, her eyes still fixed upon him, her face and lips blanching to death-like whiteness. "Are you Eugène?" she asked, in a low, frightened tone. "Tell me who you are, and who it is they have taken up-stairs."

"I am not Eugène, Madame—I am his brother, Léonce. Lean upon me as if I were indeed your son," he said, much agitated, but forgetting his own grief in hers.

"Yes: I know you now—so like each other! But where is my son? Is he hurt? Is he killed? Tell me quickly, Léonce. He loved you, Léonce—he always loved *you!*"

"My brother was thrown from his horse, Madame, and he is badly hurt."

Without another word, she ran past him, and up the stairs to her son's apartment, to the bed where they had laid him, and seeing him, as she

thought, dead, she lost consciousness, and would have fallen to the floor, had not Max Ashton caught her in his arms. One glance at her beautiful face, as he laid her upon a couch in the next room, convinced him that Madame Zoraya de St. Aignan and Cécile Layet, the lovely quadroon he had seen once or twice when he was in New Orleans years before, were one and the same person. He had not time to think then how impossible such a thing could be, but it was all made plain to him a few days later, when he learned from her own lips, in the privacy of a confidential interview relating to her son's affairs, that Cécile was her youngest sister, and dreading for her some such fate as had wrecked her own life, she had prevailed upon her to leave home and join her in Boston, whence they sailed to Italy, where she found refuge for her in a convent, and afterwards conducted her to her own beautiful home in Sicily, where she still dwelt under the care of a pious and discreet woman.

Eugène was not killed, but his spine suffered some terrible injury when he was thrown from his horse, which paralyzed his whole body from the shoulders down, and there was not the slightest hope of his recovery. "He might live a year or longer, beyond that they could say nothing," the doctors declared. He could speak, he knew everything and every one; he was aware of his hopeless condition, and gave way to alter-

nate fits of rage and despondency, of grief and defiance, at times, allowing no one near him except Léonce, who had the power to soothe and comfort him when all other means failed. One night, after giving way to a burst of despairing grief, he said: "Léonce, you know that I would not have hurt a hair of your head. But I was angry and jealous at being excluded from your confidence, and I determined to find out your secret. When I awoke, that morning, and missed you from your room, I followed you swiftly; I saw you at the end of the corridor leading to the cellar; I reached it almost as soon as you did, and in a mad fury rushed after you; you fell as I tried to get by you. I did not mean it, Léonce; I was frightened at what had happened, a panic seized me, and I fled that very morning from New Orleans, by the mail-steamer that was just getting ready to leave her landing as I reached it. I thought you were dead, Léonce, until the other day when I met you so unexpectedly on Georgetown Heights. I never knew a moment's peace; remorse, despair had followed me up to that hour. You have told me all that happened after I left you—as I thought, dying or dead—on the cellar floor of the old house. You forgive me, you cling to me still with a brother's love"—

"And will, so help me God, Eugène, while we both do live," said Léonce, as he leaned over and kissed his brother, as if placing a seal upon his promise. "But do not, through your old

sensitive pride, refuse to answer me, who love you so. How is it about your hopes of the future?"

"I have none; I was given a life that was cursed before my birth, and from the day that my true history was revealed to me by my mother, I have been in revolt against nature, against Him you know as God, against what is called religion, and the inhuman laws of mankind, which acquit the wrong-doer, and crush and set a mark of infamy on the wronged! I have no faith, no belief, Léonce—I am sorry to pain you. If there's a judgment hereafter, I shall have something to say to my Judge—" He paused, an almost frenzied expression appeared in his eyes, and he ground his teeth together in impotent rage.

"Leave the dead sins of others with the dead, Eugène; do not suffer earthly injustice and its bitter wrongs to drag down to utter and eternal ruin your immortal soul, which, without your own consent, they have no power to harm. My brother, refuge, and peace, and an eternal compensation for all the wrongs you have suffered in this life await you, if you will seek it through Him who suffered injustice, ignominy and death for you," pleaded Léonce, in low, impressive tones.

"Don't, don't, Léonce! It will only result in pain to you, if you talk to me in that way. I'm dead all over except my brain; when that dies—"

"Your soul, with all its deathless faculties, will live on," was the answer.

"Léonce, promise me one thing," said the stricken man, ever, ever going back to the old, bitter theme, and wishing to give a turn to a conversation, irksome beyond measure to him: "You have seen my mother, you know the story of her wrongs, you know her—a beautiful, pure woman: will you promise me now, that after it is all over with me, you will sometimes see her and look after her interests? She has no friends; she will be left alone here, among strangers, in her grief and desolation!"

"Do not disquiet yourself in the least, my brother; such was my intention before you spoke. I will be as a son to her; I will try, by so doing, to atone partly for the wrongs she has suffered."

"I have never been as a son to her!" said Eugène, with quivering lip. "Thank you, Léonce. Will you ask her to come and sit with me awhile? I have something I wish to say to her."

Madame Zoraya, her pale, beautiful features wearing that touching impress of a sorrow too deep for tears, but which was consecrated by submission to the Divine will, came in with noiseless footsteps, and kneeling beside him, whispered: "My son!"

"My mother," he said, tenderly, "forgive me!"

Can we not imagine how swift to forgive she was, and how in turn she besought him to forgive her the lack of love which her poor, bruised heart had withheld from him? But maternal affection now asserted itself like "gold tried in the furnace;" the "hay and stubble" of a sense of wrong, pride and angry memories, of things she had tried in vain to forgive, were consumed, and it found its comfort in loving and spending every breath in prayer for the repentance of her dying son. And might she not hope that since he had sought her forgiveness, he would, before it was too late, ask and receive the forgiveness of Almighty God, who, all-seeing, beholds the wrongs, the stings, and the weaknesses of His creatures, and pitying them, judges not as man judges?

Eugène de St. Aignan's unfortunate accident was such an opportune break in the monotony of Lenten dullness, that the gossips of society, who had been yawning with *ennui*, and longing for something new—an earthquake would not have come amiss to them—were at once astir with excitement, and every one was calling upon every one, each telling the other all they knew and had heard, which in substance was very little, but when overlaid and garnished with the possibilities and probabilities they imagined, appeared a great deal. They "drove the proprieties," also, by calling and leaving their cards at Madame de St. Aignan's door; in fact, they were

really brimming over with sympathy and curiosity.

"He was so handsome, so *distingué*! and such an eligible match! It is a thousand pities!" said one lady, who punctuated her sentences by sniffs of aromatic salts, which she always carried about with her in a little gold and crystal case.

"I heard this morning from my maid, who is a cousin of Madame de St. Aignan's laundress, that the poor fellow hasn't a whole bone left in his body!" added another.

"He hasn't a single broken bone, I happen to know. His spine got hurt, they say, or his brain, it's not clear which it is, when his horse threw him," said the old dowager we have met before, Rose-Marie's frequent chaperone, who was generally good authority when there was any news or scandal afloat.

"I heard something this morning," here put in another, always glad to get ahead of the dowager, and give her a slight thrust at the same time, fully aware that she was really very fond of Rose-Marie; "but people will talk, you know! However, I did feel surprised: they say that Rose-Marie Hazelton, after flirting so shamefully with St. Aignan all winter, and actually engaging herself to him, broke with him in the most insulting manner, and got her father to forbid him the house, and that it made him so furious and desperate that he began to tear about the country on that vicious horse of his, which he bought the

other day, hoping to break his neck, and he came near doing it. It was such a pity, for the very day he was thrown, his brother came home!"

"His brother!" all exclaimed in chorus.

"Yes, his twin-brother. Such a likeness never was seen on earth!" she answered, with scarcely suppressed delight at having more to tell than any other member of the *coterie*.

"It's a thousand pities! It would have been so nice and puzzling, you know, to have had them visiting round, and people making all sorts of blunders by mistaking one for the other." There was a laugh, and many "oh's" and "ah's" mingled with it.

"Is that all you heard?" said an old worldling, whose face was painted, whose false hair was frizzled over her blinking eyes, and whose head was so palsied that the feathers in her bonnet fluttered and danced as if about to fly away; "*I* have heard who the St. Aignans are."

"Oh, do, *do* tell us," they all cried, stretching out their necks.

"They belong to one of the oldest and richest Spanish families in Louisiana, the Del Alayas; at least the mother was a Del Alaya, and married a De Moret. One of the twins, the one who is hurt, who is the younger by a few hours than his brother, took his grandmother's name, De St. Aignan, leaving the paternal name to the heir; and they are all as rich as Croesus," she announced,

with an air of triumph, that set her to shaking so violently that every one expected to see her drop in pieces on the floor, yet no one dared notice, or proffer assistance to the superannuated old doll. How did she learn this, and that not quite the truth, as you see? Who knows? One is sometimes inclined think the "little bird" we have all heard of, that goes flying round the world telling people other people's secrets, is not altogether a myth. The only clew as to how she got her information, however, lay in the fact that her "tiger" had a brother who was an errand boy in the office of one of the surgeons who had been called in to attend the case. And what a faculty such people have for picking up and patching things together, for listening and asking questions, as if they knew a great deal more than they did, everybody knows!

"But, oh, dear me! It is perfectly dreadful that with nothing to wish for, and nothing to do but to enjoy himself, the poor young man should have been so suddenly cut off," sighed a spinster of uncertain age, who, disposed to piety, suddenly remembered it was Lent, and that her remark would savor of fitness and remind her friends of the uncertainties of life.

"You may well say cut off," quickly answered another, the first chance she had had to put in a word, "for he cannot recover; he may die at any moment, and they do say that his mother has

lost her mind. A lady who heard it from the doctors told me so. So many dreadful things are always happening, it's enough to make one tired of life."

"Who's tired of life?" cried the old doll, who having just shaken herself together again by a supreme effort, caught the words. "It's only when people get to be old maids, or when they have bad husbands, or are disappointed in love, and jilted, that they get tired of life." Her words shot out like the sharp reports of a revolver, every one going true to its aim, as she knew they would, right and left. There was a momentary silence which would have been awakened had it continued a second longer, but relief came in the person of Mrs. Col. Raquet, one of the last arrivals—it was an industrial meeting for the purpose of establishing a hospital for invalid pet dogs that had brought them together—who, after throwing a nod and smiles around the circle, said: "You will excuse me for being a little late. I heard last night that that delightful Captain Warner was ordered back to his regiment, and they do say that General Sherman's going to made some scatterbrained raid or other, and that every soul of them will be cut to pieces, horse, foot and dragoons—so I ran in to see the Warners, and found them in great distress."

"I do so wish the horrid war was over," remarked a young matron, who was dressed in the

height of the fashion. "The Warners need never expect to see their son again. It is just sickening to hear of nothing but killed and wounded people; and everything so high-priced too. I had to pay a dollar a yard for cotton muslin the other day; and as to a velvet dress, I never expect to have another. Why can't they let the South go, and be done with it, I say?" She wished the war was over that she might indulge to the "top of her bent" her passion for the "purple and fine linen;" she had no higher or nobler aspirations, no patriotic sentiments, no love of country; she could not help it, and there were thousands like her in those days that winnowed the chaff from the wheat, in the great war of the rebellion. There was a ripple of laughter after her foolish speech.

A bright-faced, girlish figure appeared in the doorway; she was evidently primed with news. She smiled and nodded to one and another of the canine philanthropists, and took a chair, her eyes sparkling, her cheeks glowing and dimpling with smiles.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, "I've had the most delicious adventure! I have just come from the Warners, and who do you think I met? The most charming, elegant, delightful man I ever saw."

"Did he drop out of the clouds into that humdrum family?" snapped the old doll.

"Who is he? Don't keep us in suspense,"

urged two or three voices, while all listened eagerly.

"The new German Minister, Count von Einsdel. And oh! he's not married, he's a widower; I asked Gertrude Warner. And he's not at all old-looking. And his son was there, too, and if you were to think from now until dooms-day you couldn't come near guessing who he turns out to be! Be quiet and I'll tell you. You remember the tall, English-looking young man we have seen sometimes with Dave Warner, and you know how we all laughed and made fun of him when we heard his name was Peter Jones, and how awkward and all that we thought him, and wouldn't even invite him to our parties when we sent cards of invitation to the Warners. Well, Peter Jones is no less a personage than Baron von Einsdel, only son of the recently-appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to Washington! It is a fact! And to think none of us knew what a prize the Warners had, he kept himself so close! Yes! he is a baron! Oh, it is too delicious!"

"If Peter Jones was slighted, don't you think the Baron will resent it?" asked the dowager, sharply.

"Well, how was any one to know that such a great, shy, awkward fellow wasn't Peter Jones and nobody else?"

"That shows the necessity of behaving well to every one; well-bred people always do," was

the retort; and then the worldly-wise old woman, turning to the painted old woman who shook so terribly, said, in an undertone: "Now that they've found out he's a baron and the son of a Foreign Minister, they'll be breaking their necks to pay him court."

"Yes, indeed!" cried the young lady, overhearing her remark, "I mean to be first in the race to win."

"How it sticks to her," was the next *sotto-voce* remark between the two worldly-wise ones; "her grandfather made his fortune on the turf;" and they both chuckled, but the young lady had turned quite away from them, and rattled on:

"Oh, if I only had Gerty Warner's chance; he's been there for months! Oh, if people could only know which are the ugly ducks that are going to turn to swans!"

"I'll say for Gerty Warner, although she is a bit prudish, I believe she'd only be kinder to an ugly duck just because it was ugly and pecked at, than to the whitest swan that ever flew. I happen to know that Mr. Warner was the only one of his family who was in the secret!" spoke up Mrs. Col. Raquet.

"Wouldn't it be like something out of a novel, if it should happen that the disguised prince has already fallen in love with the fair Griselda?" suggested the spinster, who could not tolerate the dashing, blooming young girl who had brought in the latest news.

It was now the hour for adjourning the Humane Canine Society. Nothing had been said or even thought of the object of the meeting, and they separated after it was announced that "Important business would be brought before the Board at the next meeting, and a prompt attendance was expected."

Turn we now to another and sadder scene, where in sharp contrast the lights and shadows of life appear, where the good and the evil struggle for mastery, and where Faith, clinging to the cross, prevails.

It is past midnight. Léonce de Moret is alone with his brother, and the silence of the room is unbroken by a sound. Since the terrible accident, he has never left Eugène's side, except when Madame Zoraya came in to sit with him, a prayer on her lips, and her chaplet in her hand, under the folds of her dress, both unseen by him for whom her soul was in travail; or when Max Ashton called to confer with him on matters relating to the affairs of his estates in Louisiana. A noticeable change had come over the suffering man. He had grown more silent day by day, and when at intervals his nerves and fibres were wrung with agony, and the old bitter fury began to belch forth in curses and imprecations, more befitting a fallen angel than a human being for whom Christ had suffered and died, he would restrain himself with sudden effort, and smother the outcry of torture under

his clenched teeth. Was it from pride that he was trying to school himself to a stoical indifference, or was it the softening influence of the tender, patient love of his mother, to whom he had grown very gentle, and upon whose lovely, sorrowful face, his eyes, full of a great pity and sadness, often rested when hers were lowered or averted from him; or did the forgiving, faithful affection of his brother, whose life had nearly paid the forfeit of his ungovernable temper, touch him more than all? It was a blending and mingling of all these considerations which had wrought the change in his haughty, fiery heart, heretofore only swayed by impetuous passion; it was not repentance, however.

Madame Zoraya had been obliged, very reluctantly, to give up her turn to watch with her son that night, a blinding headache forcing her to seek rest. Her only consolation was in Léonce's presence and vigilant care; she was quite satisfied that he, and only he, should take her place. Eugène was indisposed to talk; he had not slept since the fatal accident, except when under the influence of strong narcotics, and then only in fitful slumbers, from which he would start in wild excitement. He would take no more sleeping-draughts, nor would he have his room darkened. "Light! light! Give me light while I may see it; the darkness smothers me; give me light, mother!" was his cry, and from that hour, the moment the sunset glow

faded on the air, the shaded gas-jets in his room were lighted.

Léonce noticed a great unrest in his brother; his quick sighs, the movement of his head from side to side, and a lurid flash that at intervals gave an almost demoniacal expression to his eyes, made him dread one of those unmanageable paroxysms that seized him at times. He took up a book whose pages were full of original ideas, flashes of wit, and pungent satire, and began to read aloud. It was not a book he would have selected to read aloud to a man in such an extremity as this one's, but Eugène had asked for it, in fact, had read a portion of it before he was hurt, and his pearl-handled paper-cutter was between the pages where he had left off. After some time, Léonce observed that the book neither soothed nor interested him, and having closed it, he began to talk to him in cheerful tones of their pleasant days and merry adventures abroad, when life was all sunshine to both, smoothing his forehead the while with touches as light and gentle as a woman's; but no response was made. It was evident that silence was what the patient desired, so Léonce ceased speaking, determined to await his mood. He leaned his head against the cushioned back of the chair and closed his eyes. Thought immediately filled his mind with teeming fancies which shaped themselves into questions relating to the mystery

of Eugène's birth—questions that had given him no rest at times. Until they were both men grown, he thought they were sons of the same mother, and he remembered the shock and storm of grief that agitated him, when, one day, assorting some old receipts and other papers for his father, he discovered by an old frayed letter he found amongst them, that they were not, and that there was a mystery about it entirely unintelligible to him. Monsieur de Moret was not as careful as a man in his position should have been about his private papers, for Eugène had also made some discovery of the same sort about himself, and in the same way, shortly before his father's death; or possibly Monsieur de Moret, shrinking from a personal explanation to his sons, which would, to say the least of it, have proved embarrassing to the haughty old man, took this method of making them acquainted with the fact of their being only step-brothers. He knew that when they found out the rest of it, he would be beyond their anger and reproaches. Eugène had kept silence, determined to bide his time and trim his sails for whatever the near future held, whether of weal or woe for him; but Léonce had rushed to his father, letter in hand, to question him, and implore him to comfort him by the assurance that it was all a mistake, and that Eugène was his own brother by blood as well as by affection. Sitting there now, he remembered how sternly

his father interdicted any allusion to the subject in the future, and in language which had impressed his mind with ideas remote from the truth. The old letter had informed him that Eugène's mother was living, and his father admitted it. His own mother was dead, and Eugène was two years older than himself. It must have been a secret marriage, prior to his father's union with the heiress of the Del Alayas. If so, and Eugène's mother was still living, the marriage of his parents was an illegal and unsanctified one. How long had they been separated? Where was this woman? Had they been divorced? No. The Church grants no divorces with permission to marry, while either of the contracting parties lives. He had heard his father describe the grand wedding ceremony in the cathedral, when he was married to his fair young mother. The Church would not have blessed such a marriage. There was no power or logic or bribe that had won or ever could win her so to do, as he very well knew. He could not understand it. "For what sin," his thoughts had always run on, "was Eugène's mother set aside? Had she been faithless to her vows? It must have been so," was the usual winding up of the subject; else why the silence and mystery when he had sought to find out the truth about the degree of relationship between Eugène and himself? He was too loyal to his father's memory to admit the idea that he had been guilty of a

dishonorable wrong. And he felt sure, after going over all the *pros* and *cons* of the subject, and its ever-recurring result, that his father, having been wounded in his honor, had suffered, and then drawn the veil of silence forever over the wrongs and painful events of his early life. And now, having seen this woman, whose superb beauty was only enhanced and rendered more touching by her grief—having noted her dignity, her gentleness, and the thousand evidences of a pure mind and devout heart, in every word and action—his wonder grew, and he felt that if she had sinned and was penitent, she was worthy of the forgiveness of God and man. Now that he knew her, it was impossible to associate her with a stain like this. Had she been betrayed, and by his father? was the painful question that now suggested itself. He might never know; the dead could not speak, and he could never forget himself so far as to ask her to lift the veil of her early life for his inspection.

“Léonce!” The voice was low and clear; and opening his eyes, he saw that although Eugène’s face was very pale, every trace of passion and excitement had passed out of it, leaving an expression of fixed calm and quiet resolve upon his countenance.

“Léonce, I have not told you all that you should know. It is cowardly to disturb the ashes of the dead; but I must do it in this case, lest you hear what I have to say from lips that

would blame and reproach my mother when mine are silent in death; for, by the inexorable logic of human events, it would come to you in the near or the distant future."

"Tell me nothing, Eugène, my brother, that will give you pain. Nothing can ever have power to turn my heart from you; and your mother shall be always a sacred care to me, for your sake and for her own. Believe what I say."

"I do *now*; but promise nothing until you hear what I have to tell you—a sad, bitter tale."

Then he began, and in low, even tones, told his listener the story of his mother's life, who she was, and how, on account of the taint in her blood, she had been made to suffer the bitterest wrong a woman can know; and how, through all, she had borne herself up to the present time, ending with these words: "It is useless to tell you how the base wrong inflicted upon her has cursed my life; you already know how worse than death the bitterness of such a heritage must have proved to one like me. And now, Lèonce, what have you to say?"

Lèonce bowed his head upon his brother's pillow; tears of shame and sorrow flowed from his eyes at the recital of wrongs which stained his father's name, and destroyed the filial faith of his lifetime—which had basely brought wreck and misery on an innocent and defenceless woman, and shame and dishonor on his own offspring—wrongs for which there was no redress

either in the civil or the social code. He felt smitten and humiliated, the integrity of his pure manhood revolted against the baseness of it all, and he blessed God in his inmost heart that a system which had no name or penalty for crimes like this was being trodden out in the wine-press of God's wrath.

"And now, Léonce"—

"Now, now my brother, you are nearer and dearer than ever, and I will only live, so help me God, to make you the best reparation that lies in my power, and expiate, if I may, the faults of one who can no longer help himself;" he said with emotion, as he leaned forward and kissed the white, and now silent lips.

"There must be a God, Léonce. Such love as yours, such nobleness of heart, could only be inspired by Him," whispered Eugène, while tears—strange guests—stole from his eyes. "The infidelity which grew out of the bitterness of my lot, more than my reason—which was an expression of revolt and defiance against Him, whom I had been once taught to believe in and trust, for having so created and consigned me to a life that was cursed and banned—is conquered by your forgiving love, for through it my lost faith in God and man is renewed. I thank you with that fervor and truth that only the dying can feel. This sudden destruction that has come upon me—do not hate me, Léonce—has saved me from a crime by

which I meant to avenge my own and my mother's wrongs. I was on the eve of marriage with a young lady of high position, of great beauty, and of pure Caucasian blood, when, having imparted my engagement to my mother, she forbade it, and urged me to break off the marriage at once. I would not consent. Then she told me how it was with her and myself—who and what we were. I was roused to a white rage; I thought only of revenge, and before morning I had matured my plans. This girl whose affections I had won, and who, I thought, I loved, I knew would elope with me if I persuaded her; but I vowed that the tie that united us should be, instead of an honorable marriage, as great a mockery as that which had made my mother believe she was my father's true and lawful wife. All was on the eve of fulfilment, when something—I do not know what—checked my purpose. Then—you saw, Lèonce, how my evil designs were forever frustrated. I accept what has happened, the sudden going out and annihilation of strength, manhood, life, as merited by my sins. Good God! I thank Thee for having spared me this crime, and saved that innocent girl from dishonor. Lèonce, do you still forgive?"

"My poor tempted one! Do not distrust me. Remember, you are my brother by a tie nearer than that of blood—that of your wrongs. You were scourged by the sudden knowledge which

filled your life with gall and bitterness, and you were swayed by a natural and human thirst for vengeance. You accept the temporal suffering due your sin; your heart is open to God, to penitence; you willingly sacrifice life itself, thereby to atone for all. What more is necessary? Only to seek reconciliation with your Faith, and restoration to the favor of God through the Sacrament of Penance. Do you remember, that traveling once through Italy when we were boys, we used to get out of the carriage whenever we approached a wayside shrine, to kneel before the image of the Madonna and say an *Ave*, and that our father always showed, by his willingness to stop, that he approved our simple devotion? Do you remember how we both loved the holy Virgin-Mother because we were motherless, and how, in our boyish troubles, we used always to go to her for help?"

"I remember, Léonce."

"And how we promised to serve her all our lives, as her children, time and again? Do you remember the beautiful summer day we stopped at Perugia, and while straying through the quaint, steep streets, we went into a shop and bought small silver medals of the Immaculate Conception, and took them to the curé to bless before we slipped on the blue ribbons by which they were hung around our necks?"

"Yes, I remember."

"And how we went into the old cathedral,

and knelt down before her shrine, and said our chaplet, and how, while we were kneeling there, one who had observed us as he passed through the cathedral, came and laid his hand upon our heads and blessed us as if it were a sign of her adoption; and how as we were coming away, the old sacristan told us we ought to be proud boys, for that he who had blessed us was the good Cardinal Pecci, and how proud and happy we *were?*”

“I remember it all. Mothers are always tender and forgiving towards their erring children; my own is; and it all comes back to me now, Léonce, my brother, with the memory of those happy, innocent days when I, indeed, in my very heart loved the holy Madonna. Open my shirt-front, and see what is there;” said Eugène, whose dark eyes had grown soft and gentle in their expression.

“And you have worn it ever since?” exclaimed Léonce, as he unbuttoned the fine linen front, and saw the old medal of the Immaculate Conception, bought so long ago in Perugia, tarnished and rusty, lying upon his breast.

“Yes, ever since; first for her dear sake, afterwards for yours. Many a time I have snatched at it to throw it away, for there were moments when the sight of it seemed, by some invisible power, to check and restrain me; but thoughts of those old happier times, and of you, Léonce, withheld me.”

“Dear Eugène, you have made me very happy. To-day—yes, to-day, for it is near dawn—shall I bring one to you who will crown your penitence with the grace of holy absolution, and prepare you for the great consolation of the other Sacraments?”

“Léonce, it may be too late!”

“Not so! not so! Ah, God! would He, now that you lie here in the image and likeness of His Son, bruised, broken, and sorrowful unto death, turn coldly from you? Never! never! Human suffering is a prayer, it is adoration; it is like the blood and sweat in Gethsemani when the cry went up: *“Not My will, but Thine be done.”*

“Léonce, you have saved me,” murmured Eugène. “Let it be as you say; I will not reason about it, or wrestle with myself, lest the dread of its being *cowardice* instead of repentance deter me. Do what you have to do quickly. I hear my mother’s footsteps. Go, meet and console her by telling her the hope you have that her prayers for me have availed.”

And when Madame Zoraya heard the glad tidings, her joy and gratitude were too deep for words; grief was forever swallowed up in the sweet assurance of answered prayer, in the rescue and new birth of a soul now more dear to her than ever through suffering. The most exalted emotions of maternity were now her own, since she was so soon to give back to God the soul en-

trusted to her in pain and sorrow, cleansed of its earthly stains by repentance and faith. Was not this moment worth all the pangs, the humiliations, and the bitterness she had endured?

* * * * *

Mr. Hazelton had the courage to carry out the good resolutions he formed on the night of his great trial, and his daughter's escape from the peril into which she had so nearly fallen. By God's grace, his repentance, though long delayed, was real, and his return to the practice of his religion open, manly, and earnest. "I was sleeping, as it were, the sleep of death, and needed a thunder-clap to awake me. Thank God that it came in time," was what echoed, time and again, in his mind, when reviewing all that had recently occurred. And the change did not end here. Mr. Hazelton's family ties claimed his attention, and, although it came a little awkward to him at first to take his place as father and head of his household, and he made blunders now and then, at which Rose-Marie laughed in her sleeve, he began to enjoy the realization of a more domestic life, and the love and cheerfulness that his children threw around him.

Breakfast has not yet been served, and will not be for a half hour or so, and Mr. Hazelton, who went out at an early hour with Rose-Marie, has just come in without her. The morning *New York Herald* is spread on the back of a chair to dry, he sees that it is full of great capital

headings, and glancing at the clock he knows that he will have time to skim the cream of at least the most startling news it contains. In another moment he is poring over a brilliantly-written and detailed account of the brave Sherman's march from the mountains to the sea, the capture of the rebel strongholds along the route, which held the key to the Southern Confederacy; a military achievement which for sagacity and boldness of inception, and courageous daring in view of the unknown perils they might have to encounter on such a march through a hostile country, equals the most heroic military movements recorded in the annals of warfare. It was as successful in purpose as in execution, and the daring General and his brave troops were being crowned with bays amidst the acclaims of a grateful people, while the press heralded their triumphs. And the great heart of the nation began to feel a surcease of its long agony on the promise of peace. Mr. Hazleton was so deeply absorbed in the exciting details of the affair that he did not hear a light footstep tripping over the India matting, or know there was any one near him, until a pair of small, soft hands were put over his eyes, his head drawn backwards, and a kiss pressed on his forehead, then a merry ripple of laughter, telling him who it was.

"My gloves are all shabby, and my purse empty, papa, so I stole a kiss while you were wide awake, that I might win a dozen pairs in-

stead of one, which would have been the case had you been asleep. And I have such a lot of news!" exclaimed Rose-Marie, tossing her hat on a chair.

"It is well for you, lady-bird, that I had just got to the end of what I was reading"—

"About Sherman's Army?" she asked quickly.

"Yes. Complete triumph crowns their march from the mountains to the sea," said Mr. Hazelton, with emotion.

"It is the jolliest news I ever heard!" said the girl, her face all aglow.

"But what became of you, after Mass? I waited for you on the church porch, but you had vanished somehow, and I left."

"Dear papa, how good you are to me! I slipped off with Gerty Warner; she looked across as we were leaving the church, and gave me a little signal, and I knew there must be something up, so I waited in the vestibule for her."

"And what was the important secret, if I may ask?—but ring the bell first, I must have my breakfast and be off."

"You dear old papa! Indeed you shall have it instantly. Why did you wait?"

"I don't care about taking my meals alone these days."

"Since you have discovered what a charming and agreeable person your daughter is?"

"Just so: I lost some time, and happiness too, in finding it out, didn't I, lady-bird?"

"Of course you did. And so did I, papa. But now—oh! dear papa! I thought this morning, when we knelt side by side and received Holy Communion together, that it was the very happiest day the sun had ever shone upon. And now we are so well acquainted, dear old sweetheart, that I feel as if I had found a grown-up brother at last!" said Rose-Marie, looking radiant as she took her seat at the head of the table, her father taking his at the foot.

"Come, now for your news, for I shall have to run off the moment I swallow my breakfast."

"I am to be first bridesmaid," she said, oracularly, as she handed him his coffee. She always waited on him herself at breakfast, dispensing with the attendance of a servant, that she might, as she informed him, have freedom of speech, and an opportunity to lecture him if he didn't keep the household expenses within bounds.

"Bridesmaid! To whom, pray?"

"Oh now, papa! I don't believe you are so stupid as all that, and you seeing Uncle Max every day!"

"I haven't seen Ashton for a week. He is out of town."

"That accounts for it, then, for what you two don't hear is not worth listening to. I am to be Gerty Warner's first bridesmaid."

"Gerty Warner's! Bless my heart! who is she going to marry? I thought she was more

inclined to the cloister than to matrimony," said Mr. Hazelton, really surprised.

"She ought by good rights to be an old maid. I am disappointed in Gerty. She has forsworn herself. I heard her almost vow one day that if she did not marry an American, she'd die an old maid; and here she's going to marry a German baron in the face of it—he who was Peter Jones, you know, papa!"

"It will be a brilliant match for Gerty," remarked Mr. Hazleton.

"I can't get over the surprise of two such quiet and practically-minded people as Gertrude Warner and Peter Jones falling head-over-ears into such a genuine romance," said Rose-Marie, gravely nodding her pretty head.

"It is a splendid match—" began Mr. Hazleton.

"Bless you, dear papa!" she interrupted; "it would have been all the same to Gerty if he had been only Peter Jones to the end of the chapter; and as she is not worth millions, it is to be supposed that he chose her for 'love's own sake,' and because she's good and lovely, for *she* is not a beauty any more than himself, you know."

"I think she is," said Mr. Hazleton.

"She's lovely to me, too; but she's not what they call a tearing beauty, you know."

"The Lord forbid she should be anything that requires *slang* to define," observed Mr. Hazleton, gravely.

"Beg pardon, dear papa. I can't get rid of all my bad habits at once—can you?"

Mr. Hazelton burst out laughing: "No," he said, "I admit that. But what else?"

"I got a letter this morning," she answered, while a delicate bloom suffused her face.

Mr. Hazelton looked grave again, his thoughts instantly recurring, he could not tell why, to Eugène de St. Aignan. "Who is your correspondent?"

"You know, papa, I made up my mind after that dreadful affair, never to keep anything from you, but to give you my entire confidence under all circumstances"—

"You'll find me a safe confidant, lady-bird, as well as a sympathetic friend," said Mr. Hazelton, gently.

"I know, papa. My letter then is from my old playmate, Dave Warner, and he'll soon be home again. He got some splinters blown into his right arm in the last fight they had on their way to Charleston, and is to be sent home on sick leave, by the next steamer. He says he's all right, and wouldn't come, only the fighting's over, and no prospect of even a skirmish ahead. And, papa, now that you and I are so well acquainted, I think I ought to tell you something. Davy Warner loves me—so he says"—

"And you, lady-bird, what have you said to him?" asked her father, anxiously.

"Nothing—yet. I don't know what I shall

say to him when he comes; for you know, papa, I must win back Davy's respect, after all that miserable, foolish affair, before I can answer him."

"Dave Warner would never have offered his love, had you not already his respect, my daughter. Remember that between folly and sin, between simple, thoughtless imprudence and criminality, there's a wide difference, especially when the folly and imprudence—sincerely repented of—are more the faults of a neglected training, than of a perverse, evil mind, and a deliberate intention to do wrong," said Mr. Warner, in the tenderest tones.

"Thank you, papa," she said, in a low voice; "I hope the lesson I have received will have a salutary effect on my whole life. I think it will, with our Blessed Lady's help; for although I can do so only a great way off, I mean to try to model my life by hers. But there's one thing that troubles me greatly, papa; if I could only be sure that I was not the cause of that terrible accident"—Her lips quivered, and a look of pain came into the fair face.

"Set your heart at rest, dear child. I meant not to have told you something which I learned in the strictest confidence from Max Ashton, who left it optional with me to speak of it only should a necessity arise to do so. Your peace of mind is above all other considerations, and to secure it, and make you more thankful for your

escape, I will, in three short sentences, tell you who and what Eugène de St. Aignan is, and what purpose he had in persuading you to elope with him. He is an illegitimate son; he is of mixed blood, of negro and white descent; and, had he succeeded in his plan to carry you off that night, you were to have been the victim of a false marriage. He has confessed it, but it will remain a secret to the world, only his step-brother, Max Ashton, and myself being aware of the facts. Unless he has imparted his intentions towards you to his mother—poor lady—she will never be pained by hearing of them. It was out of revenge for her wrongs, and all that they wrought on himself, that he made up his mind to execute the vile plan, which, by the mercy of God, was so happily for us all frustrated.”

Rose-Marie's face had grown very pale while her father spoke; a frightened look came into her eyes, like that of a deer when he hears the distant outcry of dogs and hunters upon his track. She cast down her eyes until their dark, silky fringes rested upon her cheeks; a deep sense of the perils she had escaped made her heart throb and swell almost to bursting; while wonder, and above all thankfulness, tempered by humility, that words had no power to express, were depicted on her countenance.

“Thank you, dear papa, for telling me what you have,” was all she said.

"I am glad it is over, dear child. I would not have pained you by speaking, but I could not bear the thought that you were unjustly reproaching yourself for what was, in fact, the result of that man's own unbridled passions. Now we will never, never refer again to the matter. Your fault was venial, his intentions were evil. They say he repents; if so, God forgive him, and help us to do the same. Let the whole matter be forgotten."

"It must be spoken of once more, papa. Davy must know, if"—she began:

"Yes," he said, understanding her quickly. "Davy shall hear it from me, should you decide to give him a favorable answer."

"He must know it before that. He must be perfectly free in this matter. If Davy loves me, and is willing to take me with all my faults and imperfections, there must be no reserve, no holding back of anything," she said, lifting her eyes to her father's, as he stood beside her.

"It shall be as you say, my brave little girl," said Mr. Hazelton, smoothing the soft waves of her shining hair. Then he leaned over, kissed her good-bye, and was off.

Rose-Marie did not move for a little while after her father left the room, but sat quite still, her hands idly folded, her eyes full of a sad, dewy light, looking as if she were in a dream. Whether her reverie was one of retrospective thought, or misty air-castles of the future, she

herself will tell us. A trembling sigh, such as sometimes escapes the lips of a little child who has cried itself to sleep, recalled her to herself.

"Yes, papa is very good," she said, "but I can never forgive myself. And Davy! dear old Davy shall have no answer from me, until I am sure that I have strength to persevere in my good resolves. If he cares for me enough to wait, I may tell him then that his is my first and only true love. Dear, Blessed Mother of Jesus! help me, for I am all unused to curb my will, my vanity, my self-love and all the other faults of my nature—faults to which I have been blind and unconscious until they brought me to the verge of ruin. But with thy aid, oh tender and and compassionate Mother, I know I shall triumph." And Rose-Marie's faith gave her the sweet assurance that the aid she invoked would not be withheld. This salutary train of thought was suddenly interrupted by a whizzing sound that fanned her ear in passing, and the crashing of glass behind her, followed by a whoop from Don, who rushed in through the French window, where he had been disporting himself with a bouncing ball of India-rubber as hard as a stone.

"Only see, Don!" exclaimed Rose-Marie, startled, "only see what mischief you have done, you dreadful child."

"I did'n mean to," he said, standing aghast and staring at the mirror his ball had shattered; "I did'n mean to bweak it, 'deed I did'n, Yosey, I des aimed it at oo head."

"You only meant to break my head, did you! I shall have to lock you up, Don, unless you try to be a good boy," said Rose-Marie, trying not to smile, and determined to be patient.

"I'se dood; Davy said I was. I was des tryin' to take aim, cos I'm a captain."

"Don, go right up to mammy and ask her to get you ready to go out with me in the carriage. But first bring me that ball: there it lies in the corner."

"What oo want it fur? Gurls don't play ball;" said the urchin, defiantly.

"No, I know they don't—neither shall you until you're a better boy. Bring it to me."

"Won't."

"You shall not go with me, and mammy shall undress you and put you to bed, unless you bring it right here, this instant."

Don gave her a searching glance from under his tangled golden hair, to see if she was in earnest, and apparently satisfied that she was, he reluctantly sidled towards the ball, picked it up, and with pouting lips flung it into her lap.

"Don, your angel is watching you," she said, in grave, quiet tones.

"Where's him?" he said, looking quickly around; "me don't see him."

"But he's here, Don, he's always near, seeing all you do, and listening to all you say. He never leaves you day or night, and wants you to be a good boy, so that some of these days you may go with him."

"Where to? Curcus?"

This was too much. Don came out ahead as usual, and Rose-Marie felt discouraged at this, her first attempt at moral suasion with the little outlaw. She kept the ball, however; and when, seeing the troubled look in her face, he rushed at her, and threw his arms round her neck, promising to be "dood," she took "heart of grace," thinking that perhaps one small seed of promise might have fallen into the wild soil of his being. She rang for a servant to clear up the splintered glass, wrote a note giving directions for the broken plate to be replaced by a new one, addressed it, gave some orders, requesting the servant to attend to everything without delay; then ran up stairs to get ready for a drive to the romantic scenes around Rock Creek, knowing how much the wild flowers, and bright, rushing water, would delight Don.

Rose-Marie Hazelton was in earnest, and did persevere in her good resolutions, clearing away little by little the weeds that were ever ready with rank growth to spring up again and again. In time she found that the best way to eradicate them was to bring her religion into her daily life, instead of leaving it at the church door as so many good people do. Her sunny nature grew brighter each step she advanced, and her pretty ways, now divested of coquetry and affectation, were piquant enough, spiced with keen repartee and playful humor;

but the change did not take place all at once, as you may imagine. There were rough places made by long habits of self-love and self-will, which she often found it difficult to tide over; but each effort renewed her strength to overcome, and each defeat, instead of disheartening her, roused her courage to try again, always finding her best help in the divine Sacraments of her holy Faith.

I have anticipated a little just here—for the woof is nearly woven, and the shuttle will soon cease its busy flights to and fro through the warp—thinking, perhaps, that some nature, fashioned like Rose-Marie Hazleton's, and with the same surroundings, might gather heart by her example and not despond, because perfection, which but few reach, seems unattainable, weighed down as the soul is by the imperfections of our fallen nature.

Meanwhile quiet preparations for the wedding of Baron von Einsdel and Gertrude Warner were progressing. Society was indignant when it was ascertained that the wedding was not to be a sensational one. Society felt defrauded of a lawful prey, and there were a great many ill-natured things said on the occasion. The *trousseau* of the bride was not placed on public exhibition, nor were bids made for costly presents by sending the wedding-cards out a month in advance of the event. It was to be a sacramental marriage, a thing not understood by Mrs. Grundy

and her satellites, and they prated of "hum-drum doings," of "ignorance of proper style," of "not knowing what was due to the distinguished family of Von Einsdel," and "believed it was simply *meanness* in the Warners not to give their only daughter a magnificent wedding." Rose-Marie had her hands full those days, for every one was running to her to find out all they could, and give vent to their malice in petty, spiteful remarks, which she did not hesitate to treat in her old, frank, spirited way, very often "hitting the nail upon the head" with such directness as made them wince and hold their tongues. She was trying to be good, but she could not bear to hear her best friends abused and ridiculed. Those doing this expected and hoped that she would repeat to the Warners all the ill-natured things they said. Peter John von Einsdel and his betrothed were serenely happy, and had many a merry laugh with Rose-Marie, who sometimes related with great spirit certain battles she had fought for them, leaving out what was malicious or really offensive, making them only absurd and amusing. It was not known, except to the Warners themselves, the Von Einsdels and Hazletons, that there was a time when the engagement came very near being broken off. The consent of Count von Einsdel's sovereign was necessary to the marriage of one of his noble subjects with a foreigner, and the old royal dry-as-dust conditions and formulas had to be complied with,

some of which went sorely against Mr. Warner's republican pride; and, had not considerations for his daughter's happiness, his old, tender friendship for Count von Einsdel, and his genuine affection for the young Baron prevailed, he never would have consented to them.

"I mean no disrespect towards you or your government, Von Einsdel," said Mr. Warner, the day the official letter came to the Minister from the Imperial Court, and he had read it with a flush on either cheek; "but I must say that it seems to me to be the most arrant nonsense conceivable. It's your Old World way of doing things; but what in the mischief difference does it make whether for ten generations any of mine or my wife's ancestors were engaged in trade, or had ever been on the stage? Some of my Scottish ancestors, the Seytouns, were doubtless cattle-lifters; some of my English ones may have been pirates, or outlaws, or traitors; but those are professions, and not trades. I've got a musty old book at home full of genealogical nonsense about the race of De Warre—our original name—and the Seytouns down to the American branch, who have been grubbers of the soil—mostly earning their bread by the sweat of their brow—and lawyers, etc., etc. I tell you what, though, Von Einsdel, I should only feel honored had there been a few hard-fisted, honest tradesmen among them—men who had left behind them examples of virtuous endeavors and noble integ-

city, who had fought a brave fight with poverty, and triumphed over its stings, even though uncrowned by success; I would indeed."

"Probably," said the Minister, with a friendly smile; "in fact, I am sure you would; and I'll be frank enough to confess, Warner, that the spirit and enlightenment of the times have opened my eyes to the uselessness of a great deal of this sort of thing, and I believe, if the order of old regulations could be changed gracefully and without bloody revolutions, it would bring about a better state of affairs, and, in the end, elevate the people. But the old foundations and pillars of empire must not be shaken to pieces by violence, which, instead of advancing, retards all wise reforms. I'm heartily glad our young people will have no obstacle to their happiness. It would have been a great disappointment as well as grief to myself, had such been the case, I assure you, Warner." Count von Einsdel held out his hand, which his friend warmly grasped, a renewed ratification of the brotherly affection they had felt for each other since their early youth.

"Yes," said Mr. Warner, laughing, "I am glad too. I only wish our young Baron was a native-born American, and I can wish the powers that be, across the water, no better thing. It is the best compliment I can offer them, for I love my country, and hold its freedom and institutions in higher veneration than any thing under heaven."

It was all settled at last. Mrs. Warner rather liked the Old World distinctions. She was an aristocrat in the grain, so far as claim to good descent went, and had her genealogical tree "as old as old Adam," the parchment framed and hung in her dressing closet, where Captain Dave declared his mother used to go every day to worship her ancestors, Chinese fashion. There had been no tradespeople, either, on her side of the house, and she was satisfied at its being so because the fact secured her daughter's happiness; otherwise, it would have affected her neither one way nor the other. But the young lovers troubled themselves not in the least with such questions, or the tiresome formulas attending them. They were full of hope, and when the momentous affair was settled, only too happy to know that their lives were to be spent together, and did not give it another thought. Only once did the young Baron remotely refer to it afterwards, by giving his betrothed a hint that some time in the future he meant to adopt her country as his own, to relinquish title and honors, to become a private citizen under a Government whose constitution and laws were, in his estimation, the most liberal and enlightened upon earth. And thus united in faith as in affection, their approaching marriage to be consecrated by the blessing of the Church, with pure minds, and temporal prosperity, what more had these two hearts to aspire to? Nothing ex-

cept that by their lives they might be able to fulfil perfectly the will of God upon earth, which they determined with His help to do.

Captain Warner came home with a wounded arm not quite healed, and a brevet for gallantry in action. Brevet-Major Warner was his present style, and I may as well add that shortly after the return of General Sherman and his army, he had him appointed as one of his staff officers, with residence in Washington, which was to be the permanent headquarters of the General of the Army. But the brave fellow met with one reverse after his arrival home, which he never allowed himself to anticipate. Rose-Marie could not be persuaded to revoke her determination, or say to him what he most wished on earth to hear from her lips, that she loved him, until one year should have expired. "I am testing myself, Davy, and you must wait until I am satisfied of certain things. You will thank me for this when you know everything. And what is a year? Why, Davy, it will spin round almost before you know it. I'm only afraid I'm giving myself too little time."

"Tell me just one thing, Rose-Marie," he said, looking rather gloomy; "are there two of us, that you require so long a time to make up your mind as to which you shall favor?"

"No, Davy, there is only you. Only be patient, and trust me to the end," she answered, with a grave, sweet smile.

"So I will, darling," he replied; "I have always trusted you, but never more than now. But may I come as often, and whenever I like?"

"Come as any other friend would, Davy, not otherwise, until the year is over. And you must not in any manner try to persuade me to alter my determination, for it will only end in disappointment if you do."

And though far from feeling resigned to that which he could not fairly comprehend, and which was, as he thought, a most unnecessary delay, Captain Warner yielded, if not with the best grace in the world, with at least good faith.

A letter from his factor in New Orleans urging his immediate presence, was received one evening by Léonce de Moret, which contained the following intelligence: "The octagonal tower of the old Del Alaya house had been struck by lightning in a recent violent storm, and left a complete ruin; and, owing to that, or other causes, fissures had opened in the walls of the main building, threatening danger, and perhaps destruction, to the valuable and costly things accumulated there from generation to generation.

"I was so uneasy," wrote the old factor, "that I procured the services of the best builder in the city to examine the dilapidated building, and it is his opinion that the great age of the house, and the moisture of the climate, which has been acting on it for nearly two centuries, had together done the work; the mortar is rotten, he

says, and no repairs will avail, as it may crumble to pieces at any moment."

It was clear to Léonce that he must not delay his departure, if he would secure the treasures secreted in the old house. He almost wished the dreaded catastrophe had actually happened when the tower was struck by lightning—for how could he leave his brother? He could not bear to think of it. He went immediately to see his physicians, determined to be governed by their opinion of the invalid's condition. Both told him that no immediate danger was to be apprehended, and that it would be perfectly safe for him to leave him for at least a few weeks. He then hurried off to Max Ashton to show him the letter, and ask him to accompany him, as he had promised to do when the time came. His next business was to see Father Powell, by whose ministrations Eugène de St. Aignan had been happily restored to his long-abandoned Faith, to commend the penitent man and his afflicted mother to his friendly, as well as his spiritual care during his absence—a care which the priest most kindly promised to attend to, having already become deeply interested in both. Later he went home, and after asking Eugène how he felt, told him that he had received a letter that evening which demanded his immediate presence in New Orleans. "I shall not allow a single unnecessary delay to detain me, be sure of that, Eugène. The old house is tumbling to pieces,

and I must see to having all that is most valuable removed and stored in a place of safety. When I come back I will tell you all about the 'treasure-trove' our poor father made such a mystery about, a secret which it did not accord with my wishes to have you excluded from."

"I know it now, dear Léonce. Go, and get back as soon as you can; I want *you* close—close by me, when the hour of separation comes. Mother, your cares will be doubled; Léonce has to go to New Orleans for a little while," he said to Madame Zoraya, who just then entered the room.

"To New Orleans!" she said, giving a little start, and fixing her dark, dreamy eyes on his face—sad eyes, that were generally veiled by the heavy, black-fringed lids: "to the old city—but Monsieur de Moret"—so she always called him—"may I ask one favor?"

"Fifty, madame; if I can be of the least service to you, command me, and I will spare no pains to carry out your wishes. I leave by the early morning train for the South."

"It is only a letter to the venerable curé of St. Agatha's Church, Monsieur Prévost. He is my godfather, and will be able to send me information which I very much desire to have—that is, if he lives."

"I will deliver it in person, madame. I hope, with your tender care, to find my brother better when I return."

"He shall lack nothing that a mother's love can give," she said, turning her sad eyes on the pallid face of her son. "I will send my letter to your room, Monsieur de Moret, by one of the servants before ten o'clock."

Then she held out her hand to say "good-bye," which Léonce bent over and reverently kissed, said *au revoir* to Eugène, who he knew of old had a superstitious dislike to "good-byes," and went up to his room to prepare for his journey. The package to Monsieur Prévost, the curé of St. Agatha's, was sent up at the hour named by Madame Zoraya, and he had just put it into the secret compartment of his trunk, with his own private papers and bank-book, when a servant tapped at his door to tell him that the carriage which he had engaged to convey himself and baggage to the Arlington Hotel, where he intended to spend the night to avoid disturbing his brother at the early hour he expected to leave, was at the door. Max Ashton met him at the depot next morning, and they started on their journey southward, by the speediest route. Max Ashton felt that he was going on a somewhat disagreeable errand, yet his every sense was on the alert with interest and curiosity to see the ending of the drama of the old house, in whose history he and Dave Warner had been so strangely mixed up. "It will be quite a satisfactory winding up if the old rattle-trap should tumble to pieces, in so far as the

event would appease the *manes* of its original founder, Dom Pedro del Alaya, by the assurance it would give that destruction came by the changes of time, and the possible extinction of his race, before it fell into the possession of strangers, to be profaned by vulgar feet."

Meeting with no delays on the route, our two travelers arrived at New Orleans in good time. Léonce de Moret's first care was to send a messenger to notify his factor of his arrival, and request his punctual attendance at the old house at eight o'clock on the following morning, as it was then too late to proceed to business. At the hour appointed, Léonce and Max Ashton found themselves ascending the rickety steps leading up to the ancient portals—now opened wide—over which Dom Pedro del Alaya had caused his name and coat-of-arms to be carved in stone two hundred years before—now, alas! shrouded in moss and lichen as in a winding-sheet. The factor, his voice tremulous and piping with old age, was there to receive and conduct them through grounds and house. Oh! what a wilderness of greenery and bloom was there—flaming tropical leaves as if stained and dyed by the sunsets that had kissed them; gorgeous tropical flowers, gleaming and burnished, and glowing with exuberant color; tangles of blossom-laden vines, fragrant and luxuriant, climbing, sprawling, and tossing over everything. The tower was indeed a ruin, the *débris* choking up the

marble-paved court. The peacock, once as gorgeous as Solomon in his glory, now robbed of his splendid plumage by age and neglect, bedraggled and feeble, dozed in the shade. Before entering the house, the old factor drew a leather string from his bosom, to which was suspended a small, thick, brass key. "My master," he said, presenting the key to Léonce, "gave this into my care when he went to France. 'A reward,' he said—but which I do not ask—'depends on your faithful guardianship of that key, until the time comes for my son Léonce, the heir, to receive it.' I have guarded it, Messire; I don't know to what it belongs, or what it conceals—that was not my business; but here it is, and I suppose you know what to do with it."

"Yes, I know; my father told me on his deathbed. It keeps the Del Alayas' treasures. Thank you, faithful old friend, for having so guarded it," said Léonce, grasping the old man's hand.

"Thanks to the good God!" he exclaimed. "I have often wondered what had become of them. I was afraid they had been stolen, or turned into money, or made away with. Now I see what racking thoughts I might have spared my old head—now I can die in peace. It's a cruel hurt, Messire, when you grow to have evil thoughts about one you have had faith in and served."

They went in. The same gray, ghostly veil of dust was over everything, just as Max Ashton

had seen it years before, only thicker and grayer; and in some places it rippled along the floors from the drafts that had crept in through the crevices made in the walls. They went into the music room to look at a dangerous fissure in the north wall, and suddenly encountered old Chápita as she entered it by an opposite door. She had not changed as much as might have been expected in all these years, for time does not bear upon the pure African race as heavily as upon the white; it is only in the intermediate mixed race that scrofula in its many terrible forms, blood poison and other ills combine with time to bring on premature age and decay, and extinguish the generations. The old creature's wool was as white as snow, and stood out in a high fleece around her black shrivelled face; her fingers were like talons, and she bent her head forward more than she used to; but her small, piercing black eyes were as keen as ever, with the same sharp expressive outlook in them, as if for something she was always expecting. When she saw them standing there, Léonce, Max Ashton, and the factor, in the broad glare that poured in through the open shutters, she stopped an instant, shading her eyes with her hand, then with an outcry of joy, sprang forward, seized Léonce's hands, bending over them, feeling their length and examining the joints of his wrists, and before he could speak or prevent her, she had dropped on the floor at his feet, feeling

them also with her fingers, scanning their shape and size, and suddenly, as if to make herself perfectly sure of something, she snatched his low shoe from one of his feet, and through his silk stocking found confirmation of her hopes. Yes, it was Léonce! It was Eugène who had the great joints at his wrists and on his feet the "lark" heels, as the negroes call them, and not her nursling! She laid her old white head upon them, she wet them with her tears, she kissed them, whimpering with joy, as one may sometimes see a faithful dog do, that has been long separated from his master, on his return home.

"She knows you, Messire," said the old factor. Then he spoke to Chapita in her own dialect. She rose up, trembling in every limb, her old face crinkled with delight.

"Him! Yes! My lilly Misses' baby! Yes Chapita know him hands! know him feet. Pah! no nigger blood dah! Oh my lilly Missis' baby-boy!" Then she burst into tears, and Léonce, much touched by her faithful love, spoke gently and kindly—through the factor—called her "Maummy," and assured her that he would take care of her as long as she lived for having loved and served his fair young mother with so much fidelity. Then she went back to her own quarters to brood over her happiness, after she was promised that she should see him before he left.

After examining the house, and being fully

convinced of the dangerous condition of its walls, Léonce led the way to the library, and requested Max Ashton and the factor to take their stand in front of the book shelves that lined the wall half way up to the ceiling. The top shelf was finished in fine brass carved work, and held a bronze bust of Camoens, another of Calderon, both laurel-crowned. These shelves were uniform with others that the room contained: there was no difference except they were against a deep partition between two arches which opened into the music room. Léonce, having assigned this post to them, and requesting them to keep their eyes fixed upon the compartment, left them and hastened down into the cellar.

He shuddered as he ran down the steps; his eye glanced towards a black, crusted stain upon the floor, with a sickening thrill; but he wished to bury the memory of it all, and dashed by the spot, between the massive stone pillars that supported the flooring of the house above, and found himself in a long, narrow, and partially lighted apartment, one end of which was separated from the rest by strong iron bars. It was here that the wine-casks from Spain and Portugal, from France and Chios, used to be stored by the Del Alayas. There they stood yet, ranged against the walls, as black as ebony and draped with cobwebs, each one numbered, he saw, as pushing the cobwebs aside he stooped to examine them. There were iron hooks in the wall

above them, doubtless used in former times to hang hampers of foreign fruits and fine Sicilian oils on, for, here and there, shreds and tatters of straw-work were trailing from them.

"No. 5, third one above," said Léonce, glancing into a small note-book that he took out of his breast pocket. "I hope there's no mistake, but here goes!" He sprang upon the cask, scattering a congress of black shining cockchafers and roaches and centipedes that had congregated there, in alarm at the unwonted sounds that had broken the long silence of their domain; and seizing the third hook above the cask, he gave a vigorous pull, but it did not move. Again he tried, this time with both hands. It yielded with a creak that sounded like a groan; another effort, and it slid down until it suddenly stopped as if caught by a spring.

And what did Mr. Ashton and the old factor see, standing just above there as Léonce drew down the spring in the wine-cellar? They saw the compartment of book-shelves, over which stood the busts of Camoens and Calderon, suddenly begin to rise, and ascend until the laurel-wreathed heads of the poets touched the ceiling, revealing to their astonished eyes a massive iron door, about five feet square. That was all. Léonce now came in, flushed, eager, and wondering.

"This must be the key," he said, "it is the one you gave me. How strange it all seems. I

will try it, Mr. Ashton, and see if it is the 'sesame' to this case of Aladdin. It fits the lock!"

It did indeed fit the lock, and turned easily; the door swung open and there, arranged on shelves and in caskets, was the "treasure-trove" of the house of Del Alaya. Ingots of gold, bars of silver, bags of coin of high value, a dinner service of gold, and goblets of the same precious metal set with jewels; there were jewels, set and in rough, diamonds from Peru, opals from "Farther Ind," pearls from the Orient, white, rose-colored, and black; and more magnificent than all, set apart from the rest, was a chalice, paten, cruets, and an *ostensorium* in massive gold, thickly set with gems. These were the treasures accumulated by Don Pedro del Alaya, and this the receptacle he had had constructed for their preservation and concealment. Each heir in turn had seen them, but bound by terrible conditions, had respected his will and left them intact, passing them on from generation to generation, until at last, a female, the mother of Léonce, was the only representative of her race, in which case the hard conditions of their possession were broken. But she adhered to the traditions of her ancestors; she would not suffer them to be touched, or the smallest portion of them to be removed, and without having the slightest wish to see them, left them unconditionally to her son, Léonce de Moret. As the

best *amende* he could make to the memory of the wife, whose heart he had broken, her husband, Gabriel de Moret, faithfully adhered to the promise he had made her concerning them, and guarded the old Del Alaya treasures committed to his honor, to the hour of his own death.

"I had enough without it," said Léonce, dropping into a chair. "Good God! Mr. Ashton, what shall I do with it all?—that gold dinner-set and those gold jewelled goblets, big enough for chalices!"

"I don't know, Léonce, but as your legal adviser I would suggest that an inventory of these things be taken, and their removal to a place of safety before the house falls and buries them;" said Max Ashton, gravely.

"Mr. Ashton, I almost wish it would; it would save me no end of trouble."

"And deprive you of the means of doing no end of good."

"I did not think of that," said Léonce, thoughtfully; "you are right. If Father Felix will help, we can make the inventory now."

"Yes, yes," answered the old factor, rejuvenated for the time being by the rich feast his eyes had enjoyed. "At once. The walls are full of strange tickings. I have pen, and ink, and in yonder *escritoire* is paper. Let's go to work at once, Messires! Then there are some strong iron-ribbed cedar chests in the garret, which we will bring down to pack them in."

"Excellent; let us get to work," said Mr. Ashton. "Léonce, begin to hand out your possessions, shelf by shelf; then we will see about the packing."

They set to work with a will, and in about three hours their task was accomplished. Two cedar chests were packed and locked, ready for removal that day. The old factor went out and ordered dinner from a restaurant a few squares off, to be sent to the two gentlemen, who determined to remain there until all the arrangements were completed for removing to a place of safety such things as were best worthy of preservation. First among these were the portraits of Monsieur and Madame de Moret, and everything in her sleeping apartment as it stood. The painting of the Madonna del Spasimo, and many of the finest family-pictures, with others by the old masters; statuary, antiquities in carved furniture made of rare old wood, grained and inlaid with pearl, ivory, brass, and some even with gold; porcelain, Venetian glass, brass-work, the library, the fine collection of bronzes, the family plate, etc., etc., were to be carefully packed in cases, and stored in one of the empty warehouses belonging to the estate, in care of the old factor, Monsieur Felix. Everything else was to be sold, and the price appropriated to the Catholic Orphan Asylum.

At the earliest opportunity, Léonce sought

the Curé of St. Agatha's, who was still living, and presented Madame Zoraya's package to him. Having, with true French courtesy, asked permission, he broke the seal and perused the letter addressed to him, showing great emotion as he did so. "Poor suffering soul!" he said, as he finished and refolded it. "Tell her, Monsieur, that I shall write. The objects of her constant care and affection, the two Layets, her mother and grandmother, are both dead, and I hope at rest; they left nothing—but I shall write and give the details. She tells me that Cecile—the dear, beautiful child—is under her care and well; thanks be to God! May God and His holy Mother bless you a thousandfold, Monsieur de Moret, for your great kindness to that unfortunate mother and son. She has told me in her letter all that you have been to them. No purer woman ever breathed than Zoraya Layet; she is one of those martyrs who win a crown, but no palm. I send her and her unfortunate son my blessing. In every Mass will I remember them. Accept for yourself, Monsieur, my blessing." Most gladly did Léonce kneel at the feet of the aged priest, the sanctity of whose character impressed him deeply, to receive his benediction; and when he arose, reverently kissed the trembling hand that held his when they bade each other adieu.

Max Ashton said, after his return home with Léonce: "Thank God it is over and done with,

so far as I am concerned. Those two cedar-wood chests with their precious contents reached here all safe, and are stowed away in the bank vault. A pair of sick twins wouldn't have given me half the care and trouble that I endured all the way home regarding their safety." Then he told that he had never in all his life spent so uncanny a week as the one passed in the old Del Alaya house with Lèonce de Moret, the last descendant of his race. Ghostly sounds as of footsteps, and the muffled ticking of numerous clocks; rustlings, and low, silent breaths of mouldy air like sighs, prevailed the place day and night, but more distinctly at night, until he almost dreaded to see a white-robed procession of disembodied Del Alayas, with sad, reproachful faces, drifting out of the shadows, aroused from their long sleep in the dust by the desecration of their home, and the ruin impending over it. Then, when bracing up his courage, wondering how Lèonce could go on sleeping like a stone-breaker, he would cast off his superstitious fears, he only made a step from Scylla to Charybdis in the almost practical certainty that the sounds he heard were not ghostly, but signs of the gradual settling of the old structure for the final catastrophe, and that it might occur at any moment, burying himself, Lèonce, and Chapita under the ruins. Shortly after his return from New Orleans, Max Ashton settled up his affairs quietly, and leaving handsome presents for the two

brides-elect, and a portion of his fortune to Dave, now Major Warner, he wrote his adieus to his relatives, sparing himself and them the pain of a personal farewell, as also a tempest of expostulations and regrets at his action; he embarked for England, and entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus at Stonyhurst, a design he had for many years determined to carry into execution.

Léonce de Moret applied a portion of his immense wealth to the erection of a handsome Gothic Church, a votive offering for his brother's conversion, dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, which, by permission of the Archbishop of Baltimore, he placed in charge of the priests of the Congregation of the Holy Redeemer. The superb painting of the Madonna del Spasimo was hung above the main altar, and the magnificent altar service of gold and precious stones found among the secret treasures of Don Pedro del Alaya, he also bestowed with only one condition—perpetual Masses for the souls of his ancestors and parents, and for the members of his family who might be living. After lingering in great torture for many months, Eugène, his head reposing upon the breast of Léonce, passed away in penitence and hope, to the infinite mercy of Him who fills up with the merits of His Divine Son the unevenness of our weak nature. After all was over, Léonce accompanied Madame Zoraya to her beautiful home in Sicily, where she and her sister Cecile live, blessing and blessed.

through their ministrations to the poor and destitute. Then he wandered away to the East to spend several years in travel, before he married, which he was determined to do after his return home, should he be so fortunate as to find a woman who combined in her character and attractions all that he sought.

At the expiration of the year of probation she had assigned herself, Rose-Marie Hazelton, having lost nothing of her brightness, but graver in purpose, and more regularly devout in life, felt that it would be safe to take Davy's happiness into her keeping. He did not know what her answer would be that evening when he called to know her decision. He heard low, soft chords stealing out under her light, skilful touches, and she heard his voice and his footsteps, and obeying a quick impulse, and to avoid a scene, she began to sing the sweet old Scotch song:

"Down the burn, Davie, love,
Down the burn, Davie, love,
Down the burn, Davie, love,
And I will follow thee."

He waited until she finished the sweet echoing refrain; then he went to the piano and laid his hand upon hers, saying: "Do you mean it, Rose-Marie?"

"Yes, I mean it, Davy."

He bent and kissed her, and in this simple way they pledged their faith to each other, nor

through the years that followed in their happy married life, did they ever regret it.

Gertrude Warner and Peter Jones—let us call him so once more—had been married some months before, and had started on a European tour from which they hastened home to be present at the ceremony which would unite Davy and Rose-Marie.

"I heard you say once," said the young Baroness Gertrude, laughing, to the bride, after the congratulations were all over and Don had been taken roaring from the room, his mind being impressed with the idea that "Yosey" was to be carried off to the moon, or some other impossible place, and that he should never see her again: "I heard you say that you wouldn't marry an American for all the world."

"And I heard *you* say that you'd die an old maid before you'd marry a foreigner. She did indeed, brother Peter," quickly responded Rose-Marie, the old, bright smiles dimpling her face.

"But, my child," said Father Powell, who had performed the marriage ceremony, and was standing near sipping a cup of coffee, "circumstances alter cases, and God has been very good to both of you in so governing affairs that you have made Catholic marriages, and have every prospect before you of happiness in this world and the next. What you both said shows the foolishness of rash resolutions."

"I like my American best, though!" laughed Rose-Marie.

"And I my foreigner, don't I?" said the young baroness to her husband, who had been an amused listener.

"I will tell you ten years from now. By that time we will know," he replied, with a fond, trusting look in his eyes.

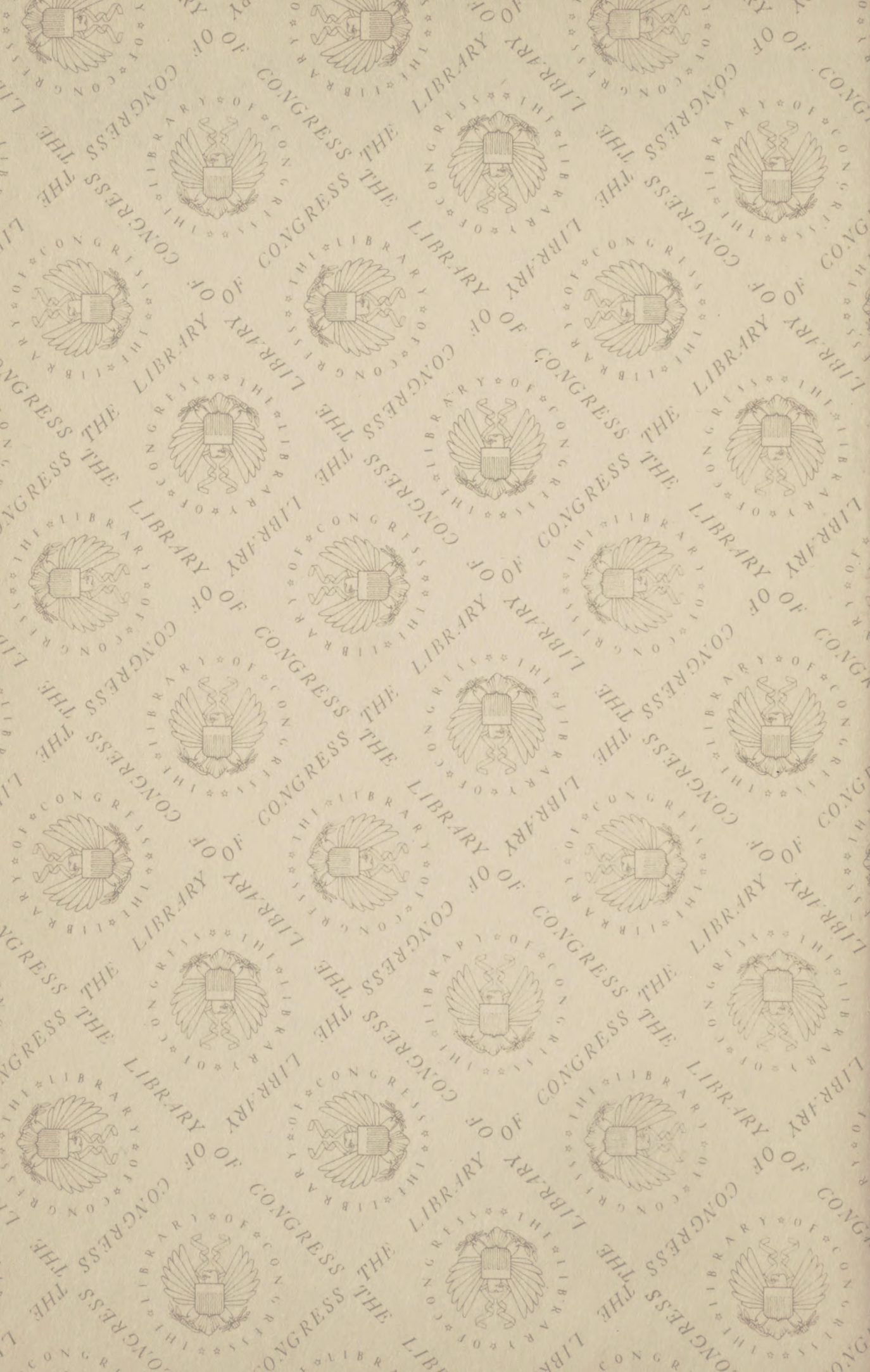
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The old House of Dom Pedro del Alaya came crashing down one midnight, just when people began to think it wouldn't fall, after all that had been said and predicted. It fell to ruin with a sound like thunder and a reverberation that shook the windows of the buildings in that quarter of the city as if an earthquake had passed; and in the morning there was only a heap of ruins where the stately old structure had stood. Chapita, who could not be persuaded to leave her old quarters in an outbuilding where the factor had made her comfortable, was found dead on her bed, doubtless frightened to death, as her house was uninjured.

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